

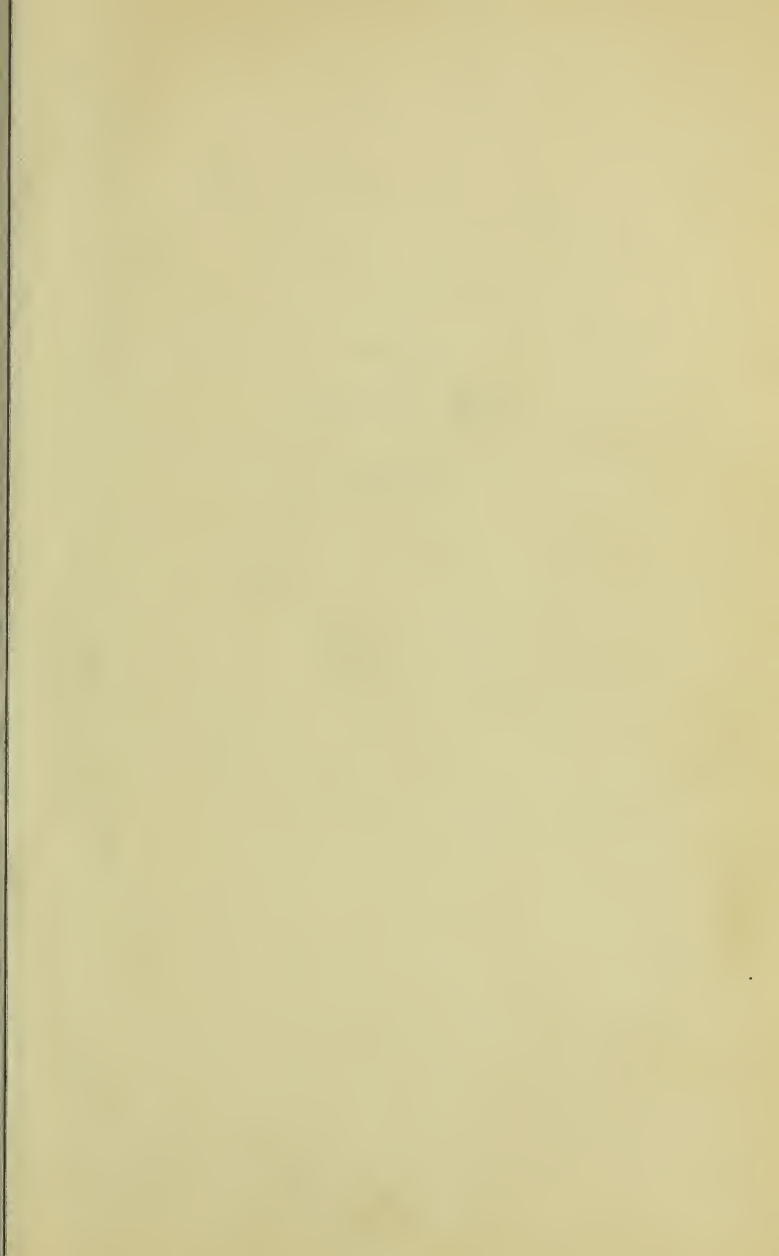


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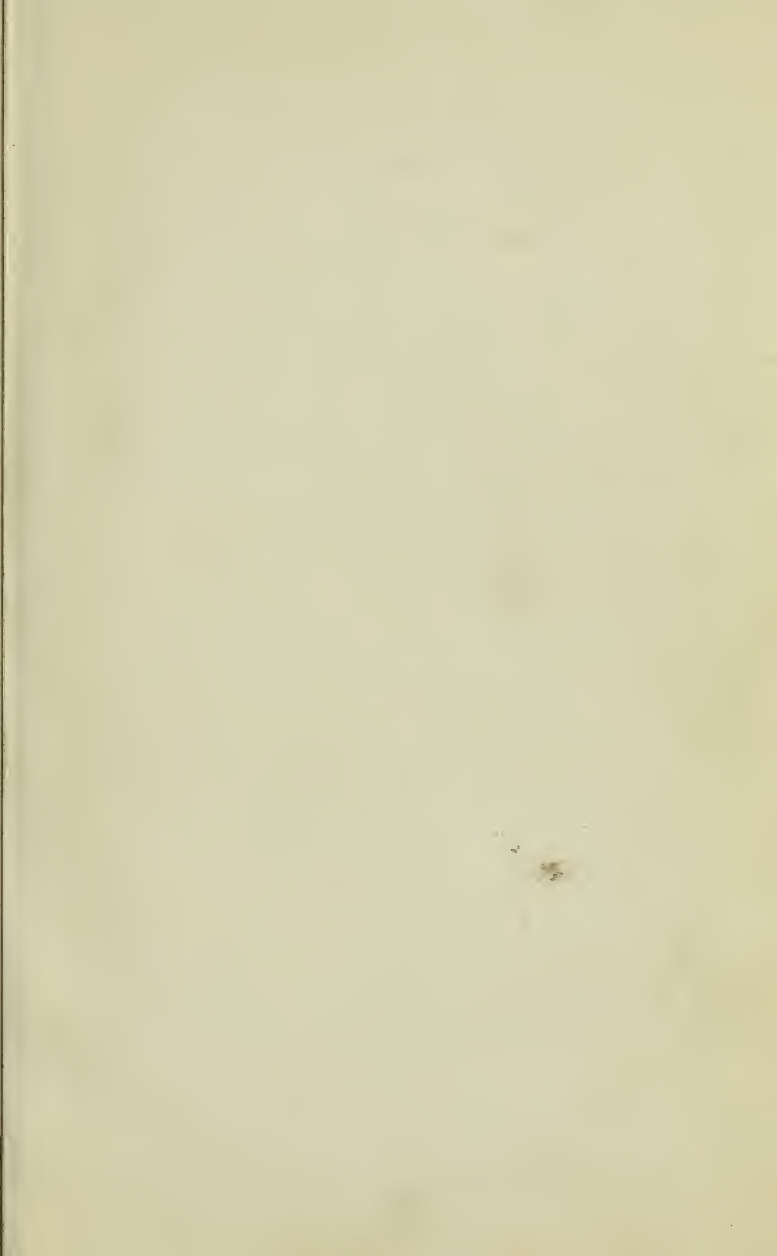


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THE
ANDOVER
WAY







BROKE THE TAPE A FOOT IN FRONT OF HIS GALLANT EXETER RIVAL.—Page 270.

THE ANDOVER WAY,

By
CLAUDE MOORE FUESS, 1885
Author of "All for Andover"

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN GOSS



BOSTON
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THE ANDOVER WAY

26793

March '36

Printed in U. S. A.

Norwood Press

NORWOOD, MASS.

Affectionately Dedicated

to my son

JOHN CUSHING FUESS

My Severest and Most Helpful Critic

91 ft 2/14/80

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THE ANDOVER WAY

CHAPTER I

THE HERO APPEARS

IT was a gloriously warm and hazy morning in mid-September on Andover Hill. Four perfectly healthy young men were stretched out lazily on the grass in front of the new George Washington Hall, in attitudes which expressed disdain for all forms of mental and physical exertion. Everywhere around them frenzied people were hurrying to and fro, shouting vague questions and consulting mysterious documents. Not far away, on the massive granite portico of the great Main Building, were little clusters of bewildered youngsters, evidently hoping that some one would soon come along to tell them what to do. Now and then a huge truck would rumble up to Phillips or Bartlet Halls and disgorge a load of miscellaneous baggage. Indeed, these four idlers were the only ones in the immediate vicinity who looked completely at peace with the world.

They happened to be close friends who were slowly getting reacquainted after the three months of summer vacation,—friends so intimate that they were often known as the “Four Musketeers,” Athos, Porthos, Aramis, and D’Artagnan. Very different in character and personality, they had certain fundamental ideas on which they were agreed, and among them they represented nearly all the important phases of Andover school life.

Suddenly the chimes in the imposing Memorial Tower struck eleven, and one of the group rose on his elbow to listen attentively.

“Say, those bells do sound good to me,” he exclaimed, when the last echo had died away. “Over in Day Hall last year I used to hate them, especially when ‘Doc’ Schleiermacher would wake us up by playing them early on holidays. But this summer out in Montana, off on the plains where there wasn’t any noise at all, I used to feel mighty lonely without them. The ‘Doc’ can rattle away as much as he likes for all of me.”

The speaker was a muscular, square-jawed chap, with curly auburn hair, piercing blue eyes, and a look of independence on his handsome face. His stolid indifference to the bustle near him was a

positive indication that he had been through it all before. As a matter of fact, he was a senior, "Steve" Fisher by name, who, as halfback on the eleven and captain of the baseball team, was a personage in the academy. But the honors which he had won did not seem to fill his companions with awe.

"That's all piffle, you know!" burst out a tall, dark-complexioned fellow, with a haughty manner and a somewhat cynical expression hovering over his lips. "You talk like a sweet young thing! After you've been back a week or two you'll be cursing at those clanging bells like all the rest of us." It was "Hal" Manning, editor of the school paper, a highly sophisticated gentleman, who liked to boast that he had tasted life and found it ashes. He resembled the Athos of Dumas's romance, and had even been known to wear a carnation in his buttonhole.

"Oh, dry up, Hal!" growled a burly hulk of a boy, with a neck like a Roman gladiator and yellow pompadour hair. "You make me tired! Just because you dwell in Boston's Back Bay and your Pilgrim ancestors stole Cape Cod from a tribe of helpless Indians, you consider yourself privileged to laugh at all sentiment. You really

love Andover as much as any of us." These remarks came from "Joe" Watson, a genial giant, who was captain of the track team and universally popular because of his skill as a shot-putter, his football prowess, and his good nature. He was the Porthos of the group.

"Yes," added Steve, "all this place has done for Hal is to teach him to conceal his unselfish impulses behind a sinister sneer. He has developed into a model movie villain, who ought to stalk up and down gnawing his nether lip and blowing clouds of smoke into the air."

"Well, when you come right down to it, Steve, what has Andover done for you?" This query, in a sarcastic tone, came from the last member of the quartette, a thin youth with a rather discontented countenance, whose fondness for the spectacular was shown by his bright blazer and loud flannel knickerbockers. He was "Ted" Sherman, manager of the football team and a very active and shrewd politician,—Aramis, beyond a doubt.

"What do you want me to answer?" replied Steve, undisturbed by the insinuation. "It has knocked a little sense into my bony cranium, I hope. It has made me understand that I don't

know quite everything. That's what it does for nearly everybody."

"Righto!" put in Joe, coming to Steve's defense. "It takes the conceit out of us. And it still has a lot to do in some cases I know." He glanced significantly in Hal's direction.

"At last I feel at home again," commented Hal. "I've been waiting for that courteous retort. It's the same gang that we had last year. Rave on, will you, and get it out of your systems. I'm willing to admit, if it will do any good, that I'm glad to be back, even if I do have to associate with low company once more."

The repartee was about to become more spirited, but just then Ted, rising to a sitting posture, interrupted by crying out, "Say, what's this coming? It's a 'knock-out,' by George! You say that Andover improves men! What do you suppose even this school can do to develop stuff like that?"

Following the line of Ted's extended finger, his companions saw what were evidently a mother and son, the latter obviously a new student. He was fully six feet in height and had a big frame, but he had a pronounced stoop forward and was very thin, so that he seemed about to float off

at any moment in the light south breeze. His broad forehead bulged out over his eyes, which were hidden behind tortoise-shell spectacles of unusually large circumference. On his head was a wide-brimmed white fedora hat, of a type never worn in Andover except by octogenarians, and his cravat was so conspicuously crimson that it flamed in the sunlight. Little patches of hair, growing down his cheeks in the shape of "side-burns," gave him an oddly foreign look. His tweed suit, which was tight and closely-fitted in the European style, allowed his bony wrists to project into space, like those of the famous Ichabod Crane. He resembled nothing so much as a comic-paper caricature of little Rollo from Beacon Hill. All four boys sat up straighter to have a better view of this unexpected apparition.

"What do you call it?" asked Joe in amazement, as his eyes travelled over the strange figure.

"Name it yourself," answered Hal. "It looks for all the world as if the keeper of the zoo had been careless."

"No, you're wrong," said Joe, who had a literal mind. "It's really a 'prep,' and he is bringing his mother to see that he gets started right. See how he's hanging on her arm."



OBVIOUSLY A NEW STUDENT. — Page 15.



"If that is a sure-enough 'prep,' we're going to have a strong candidate for Joe's place in the line. Gaze upon those legs! Wouldn't he shine in a scrimmage?"

"Yes," mused Ted, "I suppose you fellows think that this school is going to transform that kind of raw material into a finished product worth having, don't you?"

"I'm not so sure," replied Steve. "You never can tell what wonderful possibilities may be stowed away under even that queer exterior. Lincoln was no Apollo when he was a boy. I'd just like to have a glimpse of this fellow next spring."

"I'll tell you what I'll do as a sporting proposition," responded Ted, who enjoyed causing a sensation as a reckless daredevil. "I'll bet you twenty-five dollars that he doesn't last here until Christmas."

"You know that, even if I wanted to, I can't afford to put up any money with you," Steve answered coolly, with the air of a man who is stating a commonplace. "Nevertheless, I think that he may have a chance. Let's keep our eyes on him. It will be funny if you have to eat your words."

By this time the strangers, after pausing to admire the colonial buildings around them, had reached the four friends. As Joe stood up to go to his dormitory, the woman, who was in mourning, looked at him appealingly and then came nearer and spoke.

"I beg your pardon," she began, "but I am having difficulty in finding the place where new students are enrolled. Can you help me?"

"Yes, ma'am," answered Joe, who, although embarrassed, did not forget to be polite. "Yes, ma'am, right here is where Mr. Lynton hangs out,—I mean has his office,—and I'm positive that he's there inside now. Let me direct you. He'll give you the dope,—I mean he'll provide you with the necessary information." Holding the door open for her to enter, the stammering Joe ushered her with her son into the vestibule of George Washington Hall, the beautiful structure on the north side of the quadrangle. Here the auditorium and the administrative offices were located.

As they disappeared within, Ted, who had been scrutinizing the prospective Andoverian, complained in a disgusted tone, "Honestly, these new men get worse every fall. Looks to me as if this

institution were going down-hill. Things aren't what they used to be! "

"The trouble is," ventured Joe, "that you keep thinking about that wonderful September two years back when the quartette of us entered. Andover will never have another 'prep' class like that,—never! "

"That's the idea, Joe. Show off your marvelous gift of irony!" responded Ted. "But what I want to know is whether you ever saw on this Hill a less promising specimen than that?"

"No, I don't believe I ever did," admitted Joe, thoughtfully and candidly. "I wonder what will become of him?"

"Oh, some impatient 'prof' will hit him with an axe on a dark night and throw the remains into Rabbit's Pond," said Hal emphatically. "That is, if he lingers longer than a week."

"You two are pessimists, all right," interposed Steve. "That fellow is no dumbbell. His clothes are wrong and all that, but he looks intelligent. Wait until his greenness wears off! Besides, I still have confidence in what this school can accomplish. This place will improve him,—it's the Andover way. See what it has made out of Ted!"

Just then Joe appeared, wiping his brow and chuckling audibly. "Gee!" he broke out as he saw Steve. "That's a prize-winner! He is certainly going to have a rare reception when he gets in. Guess what his name is?"

"Algernon!"

"Charlemagne!"

"Reuben!"

"No, you're all wrong," roared Joe. "It's Alfred Tennyson Harris!"

"Carry me home to die!" shouted Ted. "That's terrible!"

"How did you learn that?" inquired Steve.

"I had to introduce the two of them to Mr. Lynton. The boy is going to be a senior. I heard his mother say that he had all but two points off for college, and she's sending him here just for a final polishing off before he goes to Yale."

"He'll be polished off nicely here, I'm sure," said Ted.

At that moment Hal interrupted with a low, "Look out, my hearties, here he is now!"

Sure enough, there was the newcomer, his hat held in his hand and his long silky hair hanging down over his eyes, blinking and staring at Joe.

"I crave your indulgence again, sir," he began in an odd, precise manner, which seemed like affectation, "but can you inform me where the building known as Wendell Hall is located?"

"Can I, my lad? I not only can, but will," replied Joe, with a broad grin. "It lies over across Main Street beyond that Tower." And he pointed in the right direction.

"I have just been assigned an apartment there, and I assume that I ought to move in at once," continued the boy, his face still solemn. "Will it be possible for me to obtain a servant to assist me with my trunks?"

"My word! Fawncy!" broke in Hal, who could not endure the strain any longer. "And I suppose you are expecting the butler and the second man to be in the door to welcome you, old thing!"

The recruit looked puzzled for a moment, and then, slowly catching the point, he smiled tolerantly and answered, "Thanks awfully! But of course I realize that you're spoofing me, you know."

"I'm glad that you get it," commented Hal. "That scores one point for you."

Steve, who had been listening to this inter-

change with undisguised delight, now decided to have a hand in the game.

"What's your name, prep?" he inquired in a stern voice.

The anæmic-looking lad drew from his vest pocket an alligator-skin case, extracted from it a thin piece of pasteboard, and handed it deferentially to Steve. The latter examined it closely and read aloud, "Alfred Tennyson Harris." As if by a preconcerted signal, the other three all shouted in unison, "Alfred Tennyson Harris," stressing each syllable and ending with a pronounced hiss. Then Steve, turning upon the astonished boy with a frown, growled, "Prep, are you making fun of me?"

"Oh, no, not at all. That's my name, the one I was christened with, it really is. But my friends all call me 'Tenny.' I was named for Alfred Tennyson, the great English bard, you know."

"Indeed! And who is Alfred Tennyson?" inquired Hal, an innocent look in his eye. "Is he dead?"

"Of course he is dead," answered "Tenny," with a hint of condescension in his tone. "Are you not acquainted with his poems? He is one

of the most eminent of modern British authors. May I recite to you one of his lyrics? ”

“ Shall we allow this thing to live for a day or two, or shall we annihilate it now? ” whispered Hal to Ted.

“ Oh, let it die a natural death. We shall probably be in at the funeral, anyhow. ”

Steve was a little annoyed. Surveying Harris from head to foot and adopting the relentless manner of a judge, he said, “ Prep, you have a lot to learn. No one with a name like that can dwell on this ancient Hill. You are herewith dubbed ‘ Oscar. ’ ”

“ Oscar? Oscar? ” stammered the boy. “ No one has ever addressed me as Oscar. ”

“ I can’t help that. You’re Oscar from this date on, and don’t you forget it. Now we’ll have a rehearsal. Prep, what is your name? ”

“ Alf —— Oscar, I mean. ”

“ Oscar, sir! ”

“ Yes, sir, yes, sir, Oscar, sir! Thank you, sir! ”

“ That’s better. And Oscar —— ”

“ Yes, sir, I’m listening. ”

“ Be sure to have those flowing golden locks of yours removed by to-morrow morning,—really cut short. And kindly, at the same time, see that

those little dabs of hair on your cheeks are taken off. They're positively indecent! "

"Very well, sir."

Just then Mrs. Harris emerged from George Washington Hall, evidently a trifle disconcerted, and said, "Tenny, are you coming with me? "

"Right away, Mother," he answered, and, turning to Steve, he asked in a respectful tone, "May I depart now, sir? "

"Yes, Oscar, you may go. But don't neglect to comply with our requests."

Bowing and putting his hat back on his head, Oscar walked off arm in arm with his mother towards Wendell Hall.

Meanwhile Mr. Lynton, the officer in charge of admission to the academy, was sitting almost in a stupor, as he had been left by Mrs. Harris. Her interview with him had been brief, as brief as he could make it, but it had been quite long enough; and, as he thought back over his many peculiar experiences with mothers, he could recall none so debilitating as that through which he had just passed. Young Harris, on the basis of his college entrance examinations, had been tentatively admitted some weeks before to the senior class; and the preliminary correspondence had brought out

the fact that the boy, who was well over eighteen years old, had been living with his mother in Europe for some time. The father, a prosperous lawyer in Fort Worth, Texas, had volunteered for the National Army at the outbreak of the World War and had been mortally wounded at the head of his company in the Argonne Forest. His broken-hearted widow, who had been a Philadelphia girl, settled her husband's large estate and then sailed with her only son for France, hoping to find relief from her sorrow in changed surroundings. There, except for a few business trips to the United States, she had remained ever since, with Oscar as her chief consolation, dividing her time between Paris and the Riviera. It is hardly necessary to add that the boy had been very much indulged and that his days had been spent in the company of older people. Mrs. Harris herself had never fully recovered from the sudden and terrific shock which she had sustained in her husband's death.

As she sat there in Mr. Lynton's office she was an appealing figure, dressed still in black, with soft brown eyes and a melodious voice, and evidently almost pathetically ignorant of American schools.

“Mr. Lynton,” she went on when the arrangements had been settled, “my son has always had a nurse and a governess, and has never heard a cross or profane word in all his life. Now I want you to promise not to put him in a dormitory with any rough boys.”

“I’m afraid, Mrs. Harris, that we cannot absolutely guarantee the social prominence of his associates.”

“But Alfred, as you must have noticed while he was here, is so exceptionally refined and fastidious. He has always moved among gentlemen, and I don’t want his sensitive nature to be coarsened.”

“Are you sure then that you have him in the right school, madam? This is a big institution, and there are bound to be all kinds of students in it. It is like a small world.”

“Yes, he must come here, if only because his father was an Andover graduate and always enthusiastic about the place. But I do dread leaving my boy alone. You will watch him carefully to see that he wears rubbers on rainy days and puts on a muffler whenever it gets cold. You will, won’t you, Mr. Lynton?” She stretched out her hands beseechingly towards him.

Through long experience Mr. Lynton had become adamant to such outbursts. Unruffled, he replied, "Madam, I must tell you that I have nothing whatever to do with that phase of your son's career at Andover. You'll have to consult his house master regarding those details."

"I shall stay here long enough to see that his engravings of French cathedrals are properly hung and that all his suits are cleaned and pressed. Then I'm afraid that I must abandon the dear boy and let him shift for himself. Do you think that five hundred dollars a month will be a sufficient allowance for him?"

For once Mr. Lynton was jarred out of his habitual placidity. "Great heavens, madam!" he cried. "That's more than most of his teachers are paid! It would be nothing short of sinful to put as much cash as that into his hands. Twenty dollars a month for spending money, exclusive of food, tuition, and clothes, is ample." In spite of his admirable self-control he was on the verge of giving way to his temper.

"Perhaps you are right," sighed Mrs. Harris, touching her eyes softly with a black-bordered handkerchief. And then she added, "Oh, Mr. Lynton, I know that I'm bothering you, but don't

be impatient with me! You will have pity on a lonely mother and watch over my pet, won't you?"

Suppressing an ejaculation of impatience, Mr. Lynton avowed his earnest intention of guarding strictly the manners and morals of the newcomer, and then terminated the conversation as rapidly as possible, being careful, however, to do it in a tactful way. It was at the conclusion of this dialogue that she rejoined her son outside and walked off with him in quest of his new quarters.

They strolled slowly by old Pearson Hall to the Dining Hall and the Gymnasium, stopping every few steps to comment on the beauty of the broad vistas or the symmetry of the noble elms around them. When they reached the Training Field,—the historic plot of ground where General George Washington once reviewed the Andover militia,—they paused at the foot of the Memorial Tower to read the long list of the Andover men who died in the World War. There, nearly at the top, carved deep in the enduring granite, was the name of Thomas Walker Harris, '99, Alfred's father. As Mrs. Harris pointed it out to the boy she said simply, "My son, I hope that you will always be worthy of him. He was a gallant soldier and a

good man." The lad's shoulders straightened as they moved on, but he said nothing; his thoughts were too deep to be expressed.

When they had crossed Main Street, Wendell Hall was in front of them,—an oblong-shaped brick building, three stories high, with a main entrance in the middle of one side for the use of the boys, and a porch and door at each end. Mr. Lynton had explained to Mrs. Harris that the two married instructors in charge lived with their families on the ground floor. The two upper stories were devoted to single rooms and suites for students. To the west was open country, stretching down to woodland half a mile away; and there was a view of distant forest-covered hills. Mrs. Harris, accustomed as she was to city boulevards, considered it almost out of civilization, but she had to confess to herself that the prospect was very beautiful indeed.

Pressing the bell at the little porch, Mrs. Harris was soon admitted with Alfred to the apartments occupied by the proctor of that entry,—a gentleman named Randall. Mrs. Randall, a pretty little woman who looked hardly more than twenty, greeted the visitors.

"Aren't you much too young to take care of

boys?" asked Mrs. Harris when the introductions were over.

"I'm not really responsible for them," smiled Mrs. Randall, half apologetically. "Sometimes we have them down for tea or dinner, but I never go up in their rooms except when there is an emergency. There are janitors in every dormitory, of course."

"Then you couldn't keep after my Alfred to make sure that he dresses warmly enough when the winter weather comes?"

"You haven't been here very long, have you, Mrs. Harris? When you discover how things are run, you will probably be glad to have your son manage his own affairs without having some woman like me trying to boss him."

"Oh, but he has never done that, my dear. He has always had somebody around, a governess or a tutor, to tell him what to do. That's why I want him properly directed. And I'm so much worried." Here the tiny handkerchief made its appearance, and tears seemed about to gush forth.

Alfred, who had hitherto sat discreetly silent, now turned color and actually made a suggestion. "Mother, don't you think that we had better go up to the room?"

Fortunately Mr. Randall just then came in from his study,—a tall, slender man, more than slightly bald and evidently some years older than his girlish wife. He wore eye-glasses on a ribbon; and around his mouth, beneath a wisp of a moustache, there flickered a whimsical smile, which showed that he contrived to extract some humor from what is ordinarily supposed to be a desiccating profession. Having been thrown into contact with all types of mothers and fathers, he believed himself to be an expert in their management; indeed, he had once published anonymously an essay in "The Contributor's Column" of *The Atlantic Monthly* on "The Female Parent and Her Peculiarities." As a house master he cherished few hopes and retained no illusions. It should be added that he was known to the boys as "Weary" Randall.

Greeting Mrs. Harris with the scrupulous politeness which he showed to every mother of one of his boys, he gladly agreed to escort her to the room which had been assigned to Alfred. Located on the third floor, facing the west, it had an extensive outlook over field and forest to the mountains of southern New Hampshire, even to Monadnock sixty miles away. It was fairly large

and was comfortably provided with heavy mission furniture; some attractive chintz curtains at the windows gave it a homelike appearance.

"I must admit that it looks fairly clean, Mr. Randall," commented Mrs. Harris, as she stared through her lorgnette at one object after another. "But the rug is a trifle worn on this corner. It's too bad that it is so obviously of domestic manufacture. And there aren't nearly enough shelves to hold all Alfred's books."

"He'll find no difficulty in purchasing bookcases, or anything else that he requires, at the furniture store downtown," replied Mr. Randall, with the skeptical tone of a teacher who was suspicious of any such signs of culture in a new student.

"You see I'm returning to France within a week, and I wish to be absolutely certain before I leave that Alfred is pleasantly established. Then my conscience will be clear."

"He'll be all right, Mrs. Harris, I am sure. In fact I'll be entirely frank with you and say that it is not always wise for a mother to linger too long here with her son."

"That's just what I have tried to tell you, Mother," said Alfred, with an air of elation, as if

the conversation were taking a turn which pleased him.

"Well, it's hard that a mother isn't wanted by her one and only child," pouted Mrs. Harris, bringing the handkerchief once more into action.

"It isn't that, madam," hastily explained Mr. Randall, who had no desire to provoke a scene. "Sooner or later in Andover every student has to rely on his own resources,—the sooner the better—and, if he can't, this is no place for him. It may seem hard to parents at first, but, if they're sensible,—and most of them are,—they soon come around to our opinion."

"Do you advise me, then, to let Alfred buy all his own things?"

"I certainly do. It won't take him long to learn what is needed, and he'll make fewer mistakes than you will. There are certain customs among the boys which he will not wish to go against."

"Very well, then, I'll leave town this afternoon, as soon as I have called upon the Headmaster. But I'm sure that Alfred will never be able to get under way himself."

"You'll find that he'll fight out his own problems and develop his own character by doing so,

—at least that's our theory here. And what he doesn't understand, I'll explain to him."

The conversation languished a little, and Mrs. Harris took her leave. Partly reassured by Mr. Randall's words, she watched Alfred go off by himself for his first meal at the Dining Hall, and then returned to the Phillips Inn for luncheon and a rest. In the late afternoon she walked to the Head's residence, where she was received by that gentleman in his book-lined study. After announcing that she was placing her only son in the academy, she settled down to a recital of his virtues and peculiarities, and the Head sank back in his wing chair, knowing exactly what to expect.

"My Alfred," she confided to him, "is naturally a bright lad, and I have tried to bring him up like a gentleman."

Visions of Little Lord Fauntleroy flitted through the Head's mind,—of a broad starched collar, velvet suit, accurately parted hair, and dainty manners! How could he escape? Why had he not pleaded an important engagement?

The Head was a grey-haired man not much over fifty, whose life had been spent in dealing with schoolboys,—as athletic coach, as teacher

and now as leader of a great academy. He knew youthful psychology. He understood a young man's hopes and fears, his perversity, and his underlying idealism. Year after year he had seen classes come and go. He had watched timid youngsters develop into stalwart men; he had followed undersized "preps" until they became the heroes of Harvard-Yale football contests; and he had noticed that manliness and independence are qualities which come only when the boy is placed in some degree on his own initiative. He had patiently listened a thousand times to the story which Mrs. Harris had to tell. Nevertheless he merely nodded enigmatically as he sat there, and she continued:

"But he has had something the matter with his stomach ever since he was a baby, and he could never eat some of the things which other boys digest,—beans, for instance. Often I've had to feed him for a week on just light vegetable salad and nuts."

"What a time this Harris lad is in for!" thought the Head. But, like some of the wisest statesmen, he gave his speculations no tongue.

"And so I've been wondering whether you could have him report at your office two or three

times a week and let you know how he is getting along with the diet I have told him to follow? I want to be very cautious, you know, and your counsel might mean a great deal to him."

"Madam," ejaculated the Head, at last aroused from his silence to a point where he felt some explanation to be desirable, "do you realize that we have nearly seven hundred pupils in this institution? If I saw each one for five minutes a week, that would cover nearly sixty hours,—six days of ten hours each! Where would the rest of my duties have to go? Our house officers watch the conduct of the students in their charge, and there is a school physician to check up on their health; but these men are very busy, and they can't be expected to investigate the daily menu of each boy. When a young fellow enters Andover, he is supposed to be at least mature enough to eat properly. I am sorry to inform you that, if your son must have that kind of personal supervision, you ought to withdraw him at once." The Head was very pleasant in his manner, but he did not wish to be misunderstood.

"Oh, no! I should never forgive myself if he didn't get an Andover diploma. His father graduated here many years ago, and Alfred will

follow him. He was 'Tom' Harris, back in 1899 ——"

"What! Are you Tom Harris's widow? Why, he was one of the men I used to coach when I first came back to Andover! You should have let me know that you were bringing your boy here. Well! Well! And when I heard the name, I did not dream that it could be Tom's family."

"Yes, Tom used to speak about you very often, but I didn't want your regard for Tom to influence your attitude towards my son. Besides, I didn't know but that you might have forgotten Tom."

"Forget Tom Harris? I should say not! No one could forget him and his record at Andover. He was a wonder."

The Head, now embarked on reminiscences, related story after story of the way in which Tom Harris, as a football star at Yale, had pulled victory out of defeat in critical moments; and before Mrs. Harris left, she had good reason to feel that she was in a friendly community. As she stood in the hall saying "Good-bye," the Head spoke a sympathetic word: "Don't be discouraged because the school authorities may seem at this busy season a little indifferent to your Alfred. We

really are immensely interested, as you will soon see. Only it is the traditional policy of this place to urge each fellow to work out his own salvation. Just let your boy alone for a year, and, if he doesn't prove himself to be his father's son before next June, I shall be disappointed. He must have good stuff in him, it's bound to come out, and we shall bring it out."

With these cheering words lingering in her memory, Mrs. Harris returned to her room, met Alfred, rode to the station with him, and kissed him farewell in stoical fashion, without even the trace of a tear. She even refrained from delivering the parting lecture which she had carefully prepared after the model of those she had read in school stories. When the boy said, "Mother, I'm not sure that I'm going to like this place," she simply answered, "Nonsense! You'll be right at home within a week." And so, with more courage than she had thought she possessed, she waved to him from the car window; and Alfred Tennyson Harris, left alone for the first time in more than eighteen years, walked thoughtfully up School Street to his dormitory. He had been well trained in books. His real education, however, was now about to begin.

CHAPTER II

THE HERO DISPLAYS HIS IGNORANCE

LATER that evening, while Mrs. Harris was leisurely eating her salad and listening to the orchestra in the Copley Plaza Hotel, where she was spending the night before going over to New York, Alfred was reclining on his window-seat, contemplating the artistic effect of a framed engraving of Amiens Cathedral, which he had just suspended over his mantelpiece. He could appreciate beauties like these because he had travelled among them. He was steeped in meditation on the marvellous charm of that medieval monument of stone, when there was a violent battering at his door, followed at once by the entrance of three familiar figures, one of whom he recognized as his guide of the morning. Sure enough, it was Joe Watson, who had come with Ted Sherman and Hal Manning ostensibly to inquire about the progress of his protégé.

"Hello, Oscar," began Joe, with deceptive suavity. "I see you're getting settled a bit. I

like your taste in room decoration. Those old churches are fine, aren't they?"

"Yes," replied the flattered victim. "I'm very fond of them. In fact I rather specialized in ecclesiastical architecture while I was in Italy and Spain. Mother and I visited every cathedral we could discover in the guide-book."

"Some day you must give a little talk to the Society of Inquiry about these churches," suggested Hal, in casual fashion. "There are plenty of us who would go to listen."

"I should love to do that," responded Oscar eagerly, "and I could illustrate it with some slides which I had made for my lantern. I am sure that it would be interesting."

"It would be interesting for us, have no fear," commented Ted Sherman, "and we must try to put it through. But here we are neglecting our business. You realize, of course, that we represent a small group of seniors who are particularly interested in new men. Now we've taken a special liking to you, and we want to make sure that you get started right. It isn't very cold this evening, but you'll be needing these radiators in here before very long, and we thought that we'd call on you and offer you an option on them

before anybody else carries them off. They're of high quality, and we can let you have them at ten dollars apiece for the two,—much less than cost price."

Oscar gasped! Almost since his babyhood he had been familiar with the time-worn story of the unsophisticated college freshman who had been persuaded to pay money for the radiators in his room. Could he actually look as simple-minded as that? They must think him a moron! Nevertheless he resolved to carry the joke through and see how far they would go.

"The radiators!" he exclaimed. "Those radiators over there! I assumed that they went with the apartment."

"Not when they can be sold," replied Hal, evasively. "They'll cost you only ten simoleons each, and they're cheap at that."

"Well, sir, I suppose that I'll have to do what you tell me," said Oscar, with a well-simulated groan. "But Mother did not notify me about that expense. Is there any other article which I ought to purchase?"

"Not to-night," answered Hal, with a commendable display of self-restraint, as he pocketed the twenty-dollar bill which Oscar handed to him.

Such easy picking as this was not often to be met with on Andover Hill!

"There'll be a chance later to subscribe to the various academy organizations, though," added Ted, "and, if you want to make yourself popular right away, contribute liberally. Become known as a philanthropist. Shell out all you can spare, for it's a good investment. We'll help you all we can, won't we, fellows?"

"We certainly will," chimed in Joe, with unconcealed emotion. "We don't meet a 'prep' like you every week, Oscar,—a man who combines intelligence and sympathy with wealth and generosity."

"Yes, we'll see you again, Oscar, my lad," said Hal. "Ta-ta for the present. And, by the way, don't let any one else sell you anything. There are some crooks around this Hill who wouldn't hesitate to cheat you out of your mother's photograph. If they approach you, just inform them that Mr. Harold C. Manning has been here ahead of them."

"Very well, sir," replied Oscar in docile acquiescence. "I shall obey your instructions, sir."

With lingering hand-clasps the three pirates withdrew and went chuckling down the stairs into

the night. A few minutes later they were assembled in Steve's room, telling him the story.

"That's funny, all right," said Steve, "but twenty iron men is just a bit too much like highway robbery. We can't keep that for ourselves. I don't mind holding a 'prep' up for enough to buy a feed, but ——"

"I know that," put in Hal, "but what are we going to do? He just oozes money. We can't very well return it to the poor fish with our apologies."

"I'll tell you," suggested Joe, "let's start a fund for magazines in the Grill. We can add to it a little at a time ourselves, and perhaps we can even get more cash for it to-night."

Thus it was that the "Oscar Harris Fund" was established without the knowledge of the donor; and the income from it is devoted each year to subscriptions for such periodicals as the *Yale Daily News* and the *Harvard Crimson*, which are read eagerly by frequenters of the Grill. When the tale was later related to Oscar, he thoroughly approved of the disposition which was made of his money.

Just before the conclave broke up, Hal inquired, "How do you feel now about the possibility of

making anything out of this Oscar, Steve? Don't you think that it looks a little hopeless?"

"I'm ready to admit that the material is poor. But there's a sporting possibility that he may improve. I'm not going to abandon faith in this school just yet."

With these comments on the situation, the four friends went to their slumbers as seniors in the great academy.

Meanwhile Oscar was lying awake, very much puzzled over the turn which events had taken. On the boat coming over from Europe, his mother had placed in his hands copies of Canon Farrar's famous English school stories, *Eric, or Little by Little* and *St. Winifred's, or The World of School*. It is significant of Oscar's ignorance that he actually never doubted that these preposterous books gave a true picture of life at such a place as Andover. From Eric's experiences at Roslyn, Oscar had expected that he would be hazed,—in fact had been rather looking forward to it. There was an extraordinary scene when Eric's father had intervened to prevent his son from being bullied; and it is to Oscar's credit that he determined to allow no one to protect him from injury. But Oscar had not suspected that the older boys would

take him for a fool; and this was evidently what had occurred. It is no wonder that he needed time to think.

What happened to Oscar within the next few days may best be gathered, perhaps, from a letter which his mother received just before she was about to sail from New York. It ran as follows:

“DEAREST MOTHER:

“You will be pleased to hear that I find myself very comfortable in Andover, though there are a few annoyances. An hour ago, when I was quietly reading the copy of Montaigne’s *Essais* which you left with me, a group of noisy young men, apparently my neighbors in this dormitory, entered my apartment without knocking and forced me to accompany them outdoors, although I was clothed only in my blue silk pajamas and my red and black striped dressing-gown. When I reached the campus, I confronted a throng of undergraduates, some of whom requested that I address them, calling repeatedly, ‘We want Oscar! We want Oscar!’ Although I was well aware that I was being made an object of ridicule, I mounted a barrel without protesting; but whenever I started my discourse, I was struck in the rear by some burly fellow, and I could never say more than three or four words. I regret to confess that the mob compelled me to open my dressing-gown and display my pajamas with the embroidered monogram. When I did this, they gave me three distinct cheers. The name by which they call me is ‘Oscar,’ and I judge from

some of their remarks that I am already well known.

"I find that I shall require rather more money than I had anticipated. Last night I had to make the customary subscriptions to the academy organizations,—twenty-five dollars, for instance, to the Society of Inquiry, the religious club here,—which must be in rather strange hands, for the men who besought me for a contribution were rough-looking and indulged occasionally in remarks which seemed to me ill-suited to representatives of such a society.

"By to-morrow I shall have all my pictures up and my china arranged in the cupboards so that I can serve tea when any of my friends wish it. I am sure that I shall enjoy my sojourn here, even though all the students are not so refined as I had expected.

"Affectionately,

"ALFRED."

Oscar was correct in at least one of his deductions,—there was no new man that autumn who was better advertised than he. His crimson-and-black gown of Chinese silk had attracted universal attention, and he was soon recognized as a prize "boob." It was an unusual situation. Here was a boy who could have escorted any one of the undergraduates around a European capital and made him feel like an ignoramus; yet at Andover, in a different environment, he was completely at

sea. However, in spite of his ridiculous early training, he was far from stupid. He was usually well aware when he was being "razzed," even though he might be at a loss to discover what peculiarity of his was arousing so much amusement. He had resolved to keep his head, endure his tribulations patiently, and learn as rapidly as possible. One walk across the campus in his white fedora taught him something, and within an hour he had acquired the odd little "prep" cap, blue, with a white button on top. It was not becoming to him, but at least it did not make him conspicuous, for he saw caps of the same sort everywhere. His high, starched wing collar, which had been quite in vogue on the Rue de Rivoli, was, he perceived, quite out of keeping with the soft negligées around him, and he made an investment in sport shirts. By the close of his first week, Oscar had adopted the garb of most of his fellow students. His clothes were not in the prevailing Andover mode, but he resolved to consult an American tailor at the earliest opportunity and have himself measured for a new suit or two. He had, of course, visited Tony Caruso, the local barber, for the clipping of his long locks and the removal of the objectionable sideburns. All these

transformations naturally took some time, but, by the first of October, Mrs. Harris would hardly have recognized her offspring.

So far as textbooks and routine studies were concerned, Oscar was unusually well-informed. From an early age he had been in the charge of excellent tutors, who had pushed him forward as fast as he cared to go. But he had never set foot in a classroom in his life, and he was unacquainted with the methods pursued there. The prospect of recitations, however, did not daunt him in the least, for he had some justifiable vanity regarding his attainments. For this reason, his pride was destined to have a very heavy fall.

Actual study did not begin for two or three days after his arrival, and Oscar devoted this intervening period to an examination of his surroundings. In a spirit of curiosity he wandered over the hilltop, strolling across the broad playing fields, prowling around the Gymnasium, and even entering the Archæology Museum, where the courteous curator, Professor Moreton, in his delight at this evidence of undergraduate interest in his subject, took pains to point out the rarer skulls and relics. Gazing critically at the portraits of the Founders in the library, Oscar con-

cluded that they were inferior to those in the Prado and the Louvre. He marvelled at the number and variety of the academy buildings, and at the extent of the property. He finished his tour of investigation with a feeling that he had become a unit in a complex machine, with wheels revolving within wheels, in which each undergraduate,—even himself,—had a function to perform.

When the regular morning chapel services started, Oscar, whose religious training had been hitherto somewhat desultory, was thrilled at being one of the more than six hundred men in the great auditorium, and he was profoundly stirred by the prayer of the Head, whose deep-toned and powerful voice filled the amphitheatre. As soon as the assembly was dismissed, Oscar made his way to Pearson Hall, where he was scheduled on his program to join a section in Senior English. Desirous of making an impression, he went directly to the platform desk and interrupted the teacher, who was busy making notes in a book.

“I thought I would inform you, sir, that I am very much interested in English ——”

“And who are you, may I ask?” was the answering query.

"My name is Alfred Tennyson Harris, sir."

"You must be a new student this fall, aren't you, Harris?"

"Yes, sir, I am. But I'm looking forward to this course; it's just ——"

"Well, Harris," broke in Mr. Loring, "you may see too much of it before you get through the year."

The instructor was a portly gentleman, with a shock of heavy coal-black hair and an habitually gloomy expression, who cherished an enthusiasm for literature which he hardly dared to disclose to his colleagues but which made him an inspiration in the classroom. His students, with characteristic irreverence, had named him "Dolly." He had been at Andover for fifteen years and boasted an acquaintance with every type of undergraduate, from the shameless bluffer to the incorrigible "grind." Nothing ever astonished him very much. In this instance, however, he could not help looking up to see what manner of *rara avis* had entered his course. A glance at Oscar's ingenuous countenance sufficed to assure him that the lad was in earnest and not trying to be "fresh." He gestured to the nearest bench and returned to his computations.

Oscar took a seat just under the teacher, where, as he fondly believed, his talent would not be ignored. Most of the others, he observed, had modestly selected places in the rear of the room, the consequence being that the front rows were nearly all vacant. Oscar was thus very much by himself; but he recognized in the far corners some fellows whom he had already met,—Steve Fisher, for example, and Joe Watson, whose huge bulk could not be mistaken.

Waiting until the warning gong had rung at seven minutes past eight, Mr. Loring then greeted the class in a little talk, outlining for them the work proposed for the term,—some rhetoric, a little grammar, the study of English Literature, and the careful reading of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

“But, sir,” spoke up Oscar, after madly waving his hand in the air and being recognized, “I’ve read *Hamlet* two or three times.”

The sophisticated old-settlers in the room tittered softly. This was an unexpected diversion! But Mr. Loring was not in the least disturbed.

“We are indeed fortunate,” he said in his dry way. “Doubtless we shall have frequent occasion to ask your opinion on the interpretation of difficult passages.”

This time the boys could not restrain their laughter, and Oscar, a trifle disconcerted, had nothing more to say. The idea was penetrating his brain that any too obvious effort to attract a teacher's impression was simply not "good form." Watching for a few minutes, he noticed that most of the men were attending strictly to business, jotting down items in notebooks and going at their work seriously, but taking care not to become conspicuous. He began to regret that he had not picked a seat in a less public situation. Now he was a marked man. He would be set apart by the class as a "boot-licker" to be shunned like a leper,—a survival of the "nice" boy who, in grammar school, always brings apples and flowers to the teacher. This incident gave Oscar food for reflection, and, in the end, was not unprofitable.

Oscar had really no small gift for writing. As a youngster, he had been surrounded by good books and had read *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* almost before he was able to walk. Later he had devoured the historical stories of G. A. Henty. His mother had insisted on reading Scott and Dickens aloud to him, and he had even hunted out such authors as Smollett and

Fielding. His latest idol had been Stevenson, whose novels, essays, and poems had fascinated him with their romantic charm. With this background, he had acquired a keen appreciation of the best in literature, and was also able to write with some correctness and ease. His first theme, on the subject "My Generation," was so steeped in Max Beerbohm and Aldous Huxley that Mr. Loring could hardly credit his senses. "Why!" he burst out to one of his colleagues, "here's a boy that looks like a comic character in a vaudeville skit, but he writes prose like a young Oscar Wilde! I wish I knew who taught him his style."

It was while he was still pathetically ignorant regarding the Andover code of conduct that Oscar, who cherished secret ambitions to become a poet, resolved one evening to call formally on the Head. Donning a dinner jacket as he would have done in London or Paris, he somehow slipped out of his dormitory without being observed by his neighbors, who, if they had seen him thus arrayed in purple and fine linen, would doubtless have stirred up a commotion. When he was ushered into the presence of the Head, Oscar was a little abashed, but conducted himself nevertheless with so much dignity that the older man was much puzzled as

to the identity of his well-dressed young visitor. Eventually concluding that the caller was a candidate for a vacancy on the teaching staff, he said "Good-evening. I am glad to see you," and invited him to remove his coat and sit down.

"Thank you, sir," replied Oscar, who rose to the occasion with the bearing of one thoroughly accustomed to such treatment.

The two sat for a moment, and the Head, to put his guest at ease, said, "Do you know, I'm afraid I didn't catch your name. I forget faces very easily; but somehow yours is familiar, although I can't quite place it."

"I'm Alfred Tennyson Harris, sir," answered Oscar, a bit weakly, "and I'm a student in the senior class."

"Well, well!" The Head burst into peals of laughter. "And I took you for a college graduate! That's a good one, all right! Why, I had a talk with your mother only a few days ago and she told me all about you. And now, Harris, what can I do for you?"

"Sir, I am ambitious to become a poet and should like to ascertain the best channels in this country for getting my verses known."

"Ah!" commented the Head. He was begin-

ning to see what Oscar was like. "And no doubt you have already written something?"

"I haven't composed very much yet, but I'm sure that I possess in some degree what has been described as the 'divine afflatus.' I've read many volumes of poetry, and it's easy enough to do. But I must, of course, find a publisher before I can feel justified in devoting all my spare hours to literature."

"Yes, that is supposed by many to be essential," muttered the Head, stroking his chin thoughtfully. "But I should like to see a specimen of your rhymes."

"I don't work in rhymes, sir, but I have one or two little effusions with me," responded Oscar with alacrity, drawing a notebook from his pocket. Then, standing up and posing on the rug in front of the mantelpiece, he declaimed in a loud voice:

"Winter, rough winter, I long for thee!
Thou com'st like a leaping Newfoundland dog,
With shaggy coat and rumbling growl,
And bitest at my sombre cheek!"

"Ah!" murmured the Head, almost inaudibly. "An unusual metrical form! Just what is the prevailing rhythm?"

"There isn't any," replied Oscar, a little dis-

countenanced. "It's *vers libre*,—like the poems of Amy Lowell and Ezra Pound and John Gould Fletcher. Fletcher is an old Andover man, and my work is something like his."

"Very like! Very like!" said the Head, as if absorbed in thought. "And did a Newfoundland dog ever bite your cheek?"

"Oh, no, sir, that's a figure of speech,—what is called an hyperbole. Don't you recognize it?"

"Surely! Now that you direct my attention to the fact, I can see it all. And why do you use the word 'sombre'?"

"It's just an adjective which I put in to indicate that I am sad."

"Very sad!" said the Head, as if talking to himself.

"You see, sir, it's what's called technically an imagist poem. It is intended to stimulate the imagination. Can't you just see winter leaping along and nipping people's ears?"

"Yes, my imagination does carry me that far."

"What ought I to do with this little sketch, sir? Shall I submit it to the school magazine? I'm ready to follow your suggestion."

"I should use it to light a fire," said the Head, cruelly but honestly. "It's all tommy-rot! I'm

sorry to tell you that it isn't poetry at all. It's drivel. You had better go back to your room and read some Keats or Tennyson. Or else stick to prose. You're on the wrong track here."

"Don't you think that Houghton, Mifflin or some other publishers would accept a volume from me?"

"You might possibly be able to sell it to *Judge* or *College Comics*. But my candid counsel to you is to write essays. It seems to me that Mr. Loring told me that you had some promise in that field."

In a minute or two more Oscar was out in the street, looking up at the silent stars and wishing that he had never been born. The faculty gave him no encouragement. They could not appreciate genius like his. When he returned to the dormitory he changed into his famous bathrobe and then dropped down on the second floor for a chat with "Bull" Taylor, a friend whom he had made within the last few days. Seeking for comfort, he divulged all the details of the affair to Bull, and ended by reading him the selection.

"Gosh, that's terrible," said the stolid and tactless Bull. "It's the worst I ever heard for a poem."

"Don't you think there's anything to it?"

"I should say not. It doesn't even rhyme, and it hasn't any music to it at all. I'm surprised that the Head didn't shoot you on the spot. You ought to tear it up and forget all about poetry. Poets don't make any money, anyway."

"I don't care about that. All I want is fame."

"You won't get it from that stuff, old top. My advice to you is to tear it all up in small pieces and fill the waste-paper basket. You'll go 'nutty' if you keep on producing 'drool' like that."

Bull's language was far from Addisonian, but his derision accomplished something in the way of results. Before going to bed Oscar sat down at his desk, picked out all his manuscript poems, and burned them one by one. Had not Bull announced that they were worthless? And Bull, whose grade for the previous year in English had been 42, probably never realized what a service to literature he had performed.

CHAPTER III

THE HERO MAKES A FRIEND

OSCAR's intimacy with Bull Taylor had been fostered by an unusual combination of circumstances. Two or three weeks after school began the geometry instructor, Mr. Spire, had given a written test. It presented no difficulties to Oscar; but, when the period had closed, he approached Mr. Spire's desk and said, "Sir, I don't know whether I ought to tell you or not, but a boy was looking on my paper and copying it all through the hour."

Mr. Spire, who was only a few years out of college and still retained the spirit of his undergraduate days, almost shivered as he heard Oscar's words. A wise and kindly man, he had been entrusted with many confidences, but never one of precisely this sort. He studied Oscar's face in order to learn the boy's motive. Finally he found strength to speak.

"Are you trying to accuse one of your classmates of cribbing?"

"I thought, sir, that it would be only honorable on my part to inform the authorities. It was ——"

"Stop and think just a moment, Harris, before you go on. I don't want to put you in the position of reporting one of your fellow-students for an offense against the regulations. It isn't done here in Andover."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Oscar, after a moment's reflection. He was by no means obtuse, and he could see that he had blundered. "I had assumed that cribbing was a matter which any honest man was bound to report. I'm sorry. I am always making mistakes." And he turned and walked away, still not a little confused in his mind.

Oscar's perturbation was more natural than it perhaps seems to be. He well remembered a scene in *Eric, or Little by Little* in which one of the principal characters, having been bullied by an upper classman, promptly secured revenge by reporting his troubles to the Headmaster. Oscar would never have done this; but he did have a high sense of honor which made him wish to settle ethical problems in a right way. On his stroll back to Wendell Hall he wondered whom he could

consult on the question. So far he had no intimate friends. Many of his neighbors in the dormitory and the classroom spoke to him as they passed on the campus, but nobody dropped in for a chat or sat down with him after a game to talk it over. Oscar felt keenly his isolation,—men of his sensitive type always do,—but he saw no feasible method of overcoming it. It was not that he did not wish to associate with others, for, with all his peculiarities, he was not at heart either proud or snobbish. It was simply that he did not know how to meet others on their level.

Just below Oscar, on the second floor of Wendell Hall, roomed a fellow whom Oscar occasionally met in the corridor. He was registered in the catalogue as Emmet O'Brien Taylor, from Brooklyn, but he was never called by any name except "Bull." Bull was certainly no Adonis. He was short, broad-shouldered, and red-haired, with a stubby nose and a mouth always open in a good-natured grin. His ordinary gait was a kind of slouch, his arms hanging as if he were ready at any moment for a fight. He had a special fondness for old and tattered garments, especially shirts and sweaters, some of which resembled museum relics. His speech had a kind of Bowery

twang, and he said "woild" and "woik" just as naturally as Hal Manning said "cahn't" and "rahther." To put it mildly, Bull was a diamond in the rough.

But with all these external eccentricities, Bull had a host of loyal friends. Most of the men who knew him realized that he was working his way through Andover by waiting on table in the "Beanery" and running a laundry agency. They had heard him tell vividly of the days when he had sold papers at one end of Brooklyn Bridge. His father and mother had died when he was small, and he had no family except an old uncle, who fed and clothed him in return for the money which the youngster could make by selling newspapers on the street. The boy had been helped by an Andover alumnus, who, attracted by his cheerful smile, had put him in a grammar school and had then sent him to the Head, with a letter describing his past. He had now been four years at Andover, and he was struggling hard for his diploma. It is an interesting fact that it was of Bull that Oscar first thought when he started out on his quest for information.

So it was that, when the eight o'clock bell rang that evening and everybody, according to the

academy regulations, was supposed to be engaged in study, Oscar descended to the floor below and knocked on Bull's door.

"Come in, come in," a harsh voice shouted, and Oscar rather timidly turned the knob and peeked inside.

"Come in, you dodo," roared Bull, not yet aware who his caller was. "Don't stand there all night."

"Will you allow me to talk with you for a brief period?" inquired Oscar, in a faltering manner.

"Sure, Mike!" responded Bull. "Blaze away! I'm a generous pup, I am! Got hours to burn! Sit down, Oscar, and tell me all your troubles."

Oscar sat down gingerly on the edge of the chair which Bull shoved in his direction.

"What's the matter? Afraid there's a spike in it? It's the only extra seat I've got, but I thought it was all right."

"No, I'm not exactly frightened," said Oscar, smiling at Bull's remark. "I just don't want to bother you, that's all. And besides, I have an idea that you'll think I'm a fool."

"Oh, what difference does it make?" replied Bull, beginning to comprehend Oscar's shyness.

"I'm really not busy now. My Geometry for tomorrow's a 'cinch,' and my Cicero is all done. I'm glad to see you, Oscar. Anything on your mind?"

"Yes, there is," Oscar blurted out, gathering courage. "I know I'm queer, but I can't understand some of these school customs. You see, I've lived abroad for quite a few years, and I've always eaten and slept in hotels. I've hardly ever seen any fellows of my own age."

"Gosh, what a life!" interjected Bull. "Didn't you hate it?"

"Not so much then, while it was going on. I didn't know any better. My mother and I were together most of the time, and there was usually a tutor around,—some Frenchman or Italian. Of course I forgot everything about the United States. And here I am in America, back in my own country, and everybody thinks I'm a freak. Somehow I don't fit in."

"Oh, it's not so bad as all that. Give yourself a little time. You'll come through flying."

"Well, here's a case, Bull." Regaining his self-confidence, Oscar settled back in the chair and explained the cribbing episode of the morning. "I hate," he went on, "to see anybody do a mean

trick and not get caught. I just took it for granted that it was my duty to report the matter. I'd have done the same about a burglary. But it didn't take me long to see that I had committed a *faux pas*."

"I don't know exactly what that is," answered Bull, "but whatever it is, you did it. You see, it's like this in Andover. The best fellows don't do any cribbing. You'll never find Joe Watson or Steve Fisher trying to get away with that kind of thing. But there can't help being some bad actors in any crowd of six hundred boys from all over the country. So a of them do crib and aren't caught at it. They're not the men who are respected, but nobody would ever tell on them. It's a queer phase of the honor question, I suppose, but there's a feeling that it isn't right to 'blab' on another man. The theory may be all wrong, but we all believe in it, even the 'profs.' That's why 'Benny' Spire didn't want to listen to you. If he had 'nailed' the fellow himself, he would have had him 'fired'; but he didn't think it was good sportsmanship in you to furnish him with the evidence. Does that help to get you anywhere?"

"I see the point," said Oscar, reflectively.

"But it looks to me a good deal like compound-
ing a felony."

"There you are talking over my head again!"
was Bull's reply. "But, anyhow, I'm sure that
I shouldn't report anything like that. I should
be ashamed to do it."

"Well, perhaps the fellow will get found out
some day."

"He will; don't worry. It's only a question of
time. He probably will be dropped before
spring."

That little talk with Bull was the beginning of
a staunch friendship between the two boys,—one
fastidious, refined, and sensitive, the other rough,
uncultured, and thick-skinned, but trying his hard-
est to learn the ways of the world to which Oscar
belonged. Bull recognized and respected in Oscar
some qualities which he himself would have been
glad to possess,—tact, self-control, and ease. Os-
car, for his part, perceived in Bull a robustness
and virility which he envied. It was not long
before Oscar had Bull to defend him against any
unwarranted attack,—and Bull was a supporter
whose aid in a crisis was likely to be decisive.
The two made a humorous contrast, especially
when, as often happened, they went together to

class, Oscar immaculate in a suit and overcoat made by Dunne, Bull in a gaudily colored lumberman's jacket of an ancient vintage.

Never having been subjected to a routine of any kind, Oscar was almost daily coming into conflict with some restriction of which he had not heard. In the first place, he neglected to secure his Blue Book,—a thin little volume codifying the academy rules and traditions and giving the “preps” some excellent advice. On one bright morning after his English recitation Oscar started to walk down Main Street in order to get a check cashed at the bank. Before he had reached Morton Street he was stopped by an older man, who said, “Look here, prep, what are you doing in this locality? Don't you know that you are forbidden to go down-town by way of Main Street? You must be a fresh one, all right!” Having changed his course to Bartlet Street, he reached his destination without any further interruptions; but, when he called at the Registrar's office the next day, he found a “cut” recorded against his name for “being down-town without permission during study hours.” Some teacher had seen and reported him, and he, of course, had not taken the precaution of securing an excuse from his “house-

prof," Mr. Randall; indeed, the boy had not been aware that a signed excuse was required. When Oscar complained of injustice, the Registrar, Mr. Foxcroft, smiled blandly and said, as he had said in dozens of similar cases, "Ignorance of the law is no excuse."

That evening Oscar went out of Wendell Hall at nine o'clock to mail a letter at the letter-box on the corner. He was absent only four or five minutes; but, during that period, "Weary" Randall made an inspection of the dormitory, and, finding Oscar out of his room, put him down for another cut. A night or two later, hearing a fearful tumult in the corridor, Oscar naturally stepped out to investigate the cause of the commotion. As he stood idly watching a wrestling match which was going on among some of the smaller boys, Mr. Randall mounted the stairs in his bathrobe, his face flushed with indignation, and, catching sight of Oscar, snapped out, "Go to your room, Harris, and consider that you've earned a demerit." When Oscar began to assert his innocence, Mr. Randall, who was in no mood for absolute justice, silenced him and proceeded to discover and punish the real "rough-housers." Oscar, making another visit to the Registrar, found

now that he had acquired a black mark, which could not be removed; and he was horror-stricken to learn that eight of these would mean his dismissal from the school. Thus he found himself, almost before the term had started, with two "cuts" and one demerit,—from his point of view a shameful situation, although to Bull it seemed laughable. "Cuts" and demerits were no novelty to Bull.

Worse than this, however, Oscar unwittingly made himself seem to be defiant of school etiquette. When the lad who sat next to him at the "Beanery,"—as the Dining Hall was affectionately and familiarly called,—asked him one afternoon to go up to watch the football practice, Oscar calmly announced that he had planned to read some French magazines, adding that he had no interest in football. After this astonishing statement, he was shunned as if he were a Bolshevik. But as soon as Oscar became acquainted with Bull Taylor, his mistakes commenced to decrease in number and in seriousness. He formed the habit of consulting Bull on any doubtful matters, and the latter's knowledge and native common sense saved Oscar from many a ridiculous blunder.

Some of Oscar's adventures were more amusing

than important. Once, at the behest of Hal Manning, he called at the Chemical Laboratory to ask Mr. Lapham, the instructor, for a gallon of carbon monoxide to kill the ants in Phillips Hall. The teacher, after some searching inquiries, learned how the land lay and ordered Oscar to tell Hal to come himself. Hal, needless to say, did not appear, but he was later summoned to an interview with Mr. Lapham, from which he emerged a sadder and in some respects a wiser man.

It was in accordance with a suggestion made by Mr. Lynton that Oscar had signed up at the "Beanery" instead of at one of the private boarding-houses. Mr. Lynton had explained that any new man ought to eat where he could become acquainted with a large number of fellows,—not in a private house, where there would be only a small group. The "Beanery" was a beautiful colonial brick building, more than a century old, surrounded by tall elms. The average undergraduate, however, saw little of its charm. To him it was a place where, three times a day, several hundred of his mates assembled to perform the function of eating, and which, during those periods, was alive with noise and activity, with

student waiters rushing from table to table, and an atmosphere of "Finish as soon as you can!" Bull Taylor was one of the managers on the floor, having risen to this position of authority after long experience in other capacities. The food, although simple, was nourishing, and there was plenty of it. It was, from the hygienic standpoint, exactly suited to the young animals who were there to be fed.

Oscar, however, had been accustomed to somewhat different fare. In Paris he and his mother had usually dined at restaurants like Voisin's and Foyot's, famous for their cuisine. It was a sharp descent from fillet of beef, *crêpe suzette*, and French pastry to baked beans and brown bread, shredded wheat, and apple pie. Mrs. Harris had directed him to complain to the authorities if he was not satisfied; and once, when the menu had not been particularly appealing, he walked into the office of Mr. Slater, the Academy Treasurer, who was responsible for the Dining Hall management. Mr. Slater was beloved by everybody in Andover because of his sympathy and kindness, and it seemed to devolve upon him always to pour oil upon the troubled waters. Wherever there was dissension or irritability among the faculty

his services were indispensable, and his diplomacy was a valuable asset to the school. He was invariably one of the first to be sought out by returning alumni, and the boys delighted to call at his hospitable home.

When Oscar introduced himself, Mr. Slater received him cordially. "I knew your father, 'Tom' Harris, very well indeed," he said. "He was a member of my society here and at Yale, and, although he was younger than I, I used to meet him often. He was a mighty fine athlete. If you take after him, you'll make your mark at Andover."

"I'm afraid that I don't, sir," replied Oscar, for once much ashamed of his undeveloped muscles and unimpressive physique. "I have never had a chance to do anything in outdoor games."

"That's too bad," answered Mr. Slater, taking a look at Oscar's narrow chest and thin legs. "Perhaps we can get you into athletics before long. You must call at my house some time and talk it over with me. But that will come later. What can I do for you just now?"

"Well, I hate to be a kicker," went on Oscar, after a little pause of embarrassment, "but I did want to speak about the food at the 'Beanery.'"

"At the 'Beanery'! What's the matter with the food there? Most of the boys seem to thrive on it all right."

"It may be good enough for some people, but it doesn't seem very appetizing to me."

"Suppose you be perfectly frank and tell me a few of your criticisms, won't you? Perhaps I can institute a reform."

"Well, to begin with, they never give us any hors-d'œuvres or salad."

"No hors-d'œuvres or salad!" echoed the amazed Mr. Slater.

"Not a bit! And we don't get any light flaky pastry such as I have been used to."

"Anything else?" asked the Treasurer.

"Well, they never serve us any except the common ordinary kinds of jellies; and the cream for breakfast isn't as thick as I should like to have it."

It took very strong provocation to rouse Mr. Slater to anger, but he was obviously on the verge of committing homicide.

"Look here, young man," he finally said, in a voice which he found it difficult to control. "You evidently think that you are living at the Ritz. Don't you realize that, at the price which you pay, we can't afford to provide you with alligator

pears and artichokes? Furthermore, can't you understand that such delicacies are not what the average young man wants or ought to have? The boys in this school are building up their bodies. They should have simple food, like beef and potatoes and bread and butter. Why, look at you, my lad! If you had been brought up on oatmeal and steak, you would be a stronger fellow to-day. That's your trouble. You've had too much luxury all your life."

"Maybe you're right," said Oscar, with a sickly grin on his face. Nobody had ever talked to him like this before. He was beginning to see that he had been a fool.

"You go back to the Dining Hall, Harris, and eat the food there until Christmas. If you have lost any weight by then, I'll see that you're transferred somewhere else. But suppose you try it out."

"I guess I've learned a lesson, Mr. Slater," answered Oscar, with just a note of discouragement in his voice. "Sometimes I think that I spend most of my time discovering how big a jackass a fellow can be."

"That's what this school is for, my boy," responded Mr. Slater, rising and putting his hand

sympathetically on Oscar's shoulder. "Just come always and tell me out in the open when you have anything to object to, and we'll try to adjust it. Only I don't want you fellows going around and complaining without letting me hear it. I'm responsible for the 'Beanery,' as you call it, and I try to have things right there. And now that I've preached my sermon, you'll drop in again, won't you?"

"I certainly will, sir, if you'll let me. And I want to apologize for taking up so much of your time."

"That's all right. Come in again." And Mr. Slater was left with another anecdote to add to his collection of Andover stories.

To Oscar, this was merely another one of the train of incidents which caused him to do some deep meditating. Those narrow-minded people who believe that education is derived solely from text-books will perhaps not understand Oscar's case. There was nothing slow about his mind, and, once a lesson was impressed upon him, he did not forget it. As a result primarily of observation, he acquired that stoicism which should be the necessary equipment of any strong man, either in school or in life. He learned better than to com-

plain of food or lessons or rough treatment. When jokes were perpetrated at his expense, he merely smiled good-naturedly in reply; and before very long he had developed a brand of repartee which won him something of a reputation. The trouble was that his whole past,—eighteen years of it,—had been occupied with the formation of habits from which it was not now easy to break away. It was hard to avoid ordering the “Beanery” waiters around; but when he watched one of them, a stalwart football-player, administer corporal chastisement to a fresh “prep,” Oscar saw in which direction discretion lay. It was an ordeal to get accustomed to soft collars and lounge clothes and knickerbockers; it was not easy to acquire the slang,—or, as his rhetoric book put it, the “localisms,”—which he heard all around him; and the classroom instruction, carried on by sarcastic instructors, seemed to him relentless. But little by little he went through that process of adjustment to new surroundings which is always difficult, whether with animals or human beings; and by Christmas he felt himself to be part of the school.

It was Bull Taylor, after all, who had been his chief teacher, and Oscar recognized the obliga-

tion; but he saw that it would not be good form to say much about it. One evening Bull, in a lazy mood, picked up a copy of Oscar's *Eric, or Little by Little*, which was lying on the table. Suddenly he burst into loud laughter. "Look here," he roared. "Just listen to this:

" 'They sat down on a green bank just beyond the beach, and watched the tide come in, while the sea-distance was crimson with the glory of evening. The beauty and the murmur filled them with a quiet happiness, not untinged with the melancholy thought of parting the next day.

" 'At last Eric broke the silence. "Russell, let me always call you Edwin, and call me Eric."

" ' "Very gladly, Eric. Your coming here has made me so happy." And the two boys squeezed each other's hands, and looked into each other's faces, and silently promised that they would be loving friends forever.'

"Did you ever listen to any such bunk as that!" he shouted, as he threw the book at Oscar's head. "That author knows boy nature, doesn't he? I'd like to talk with him about half an hour and tell him a few things from my busy young life."

"Yes, he certainly writes mush," answered Oscar. "And the funny part of it is that I once believed all that he wrote."

"It's queer, isn't it?" said Bull, in a meditative mood not very common with him. "Here I am, just grown up out of the streets. I never was in Europe and probably never shall be. I never have had a room in a decent hotel, and the only theatres I've ever been in have been movie palaces. Sometimes I've actually had to go without food for twenty-four hours, and once I slept on a bench in Central Park. I've really never known what luxury is. And here you are, a pampered pet, with everything you could possibly want. It's strange that I should be here sitting in your room. You don't realize how strange it is; you can't."

"And yet you have gotten much more out of life than I have," interposed Oscar. "You learned somehow to take care of yourself and get along with other people. And here I am, just what you call a common 'dub,' without any hope for the future. I'd change places with you any day."

"Not if you knew the facts," was Bull's reply. "Anyhow, we could never have become friends in any other school that I know of."

"I'm not so sure," answered Oscar. "Don't you remember what Kipling says:

“ ‘For there shall be neither East nor West, nor border, nor breed, nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face, though
they come from the ends of the earth.’ ”

“ Well, we’re the two strong men, all right,”
was Bull’s jocular comment. “And we do come
almost from the ends of the earth,—Paris, France,
and Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn! Let’s pray that
Kipling had the right dope! ”

CHAPTER IV

THE HERO DISCOVERS HIS MUSCLES

BECAUSE Oscar had been a rather delicate baby, he had seldom been permitted by his adoring mother to join in competitive sports with other boys. It is almost literally true that he had never, until he reached Andover, seen a football game or watched a race upon the cinder track. He had done some swimming at the Lido and Deauville, and he had learned how to play a skillful game of billiards; but his progress as an athlete had gone no farther than this. The mere thought of violent physical exercise was abhorrent to him, simply because he had come to think of his body as irreparably weak and useless. He had tested the effects of many brands of pills and tonics, but he had never lifted a weight nor pounded a punching-bag. It must be confessed also that he had formed the cigarette habit and smoked surreptitiously, concealing the odor by a judicious use of peppermint lozenges.

Thus, while he had been advancing mentally

ahead of most lads of his age, he was physically very much their inferior. His muscular father, who had been the most daring plunging halfback of his time, would have been discouraged if he had lived to see his only son. Unfortunately Mrs. Harris had early arrived at the conviction that Alfred Tennyson was a confirmed invalid, who was doomed to ill health for the remainder of his days and who must be carefully watched if his life were to be spared. She took every precaution to be sure that his feet did not get wet or his neck become chilled. The only noticeable result was that he passed each winter through a series of colds and other infections, hardly recovering from one before he contracted another. It is no wonder that the boy looked forward to a New England winter with dread.

Shortly after the recitation work started, there was issued in chapel one morning a call for all new students to report at the Gymnasium for physical examination and classification. Oscar, having learned enough by this time to obey instructions, appeared punctually at the designated place, where he was told to remove his clothes. Three months before, Oscar would have looked upon this as an indignity, but he was now less

sensitive, and he was soon standing in a line, awaiting his turn for inspection. As his eyes fell upon some of those near him, he was amazed to note how muscular and athletic many of them looked to be. Glancing shyly down at his own flabby biceps and attenuated legs, he felt for the first time in his life a twinge of self-pity. Up to this moment in his career he had never devoted a thought to physical strength,—“brute force” his mother would have called it,—but now he was getting a hint as to how important a factor it might be in life. There were, of course, a few boys around him who were weaklings; but, being no fool, he could see that he was far below the average lad of his age in development, and he suddenly felt a desire to be healthy and strong, as most of them obviously were. Although he did not appreciate it then, that desire was a turning-point in his evolution into manhood.

When his turn in the line was reached, Dr. Rogers, the Physical Director, looked up at him from his desk. He was a man of medium stature, with a black moustache and hair, very quick in his gestures and direct in his manner. Oscar instinctively felt that he would stand no nonsense.

“Well, young man,” he said, “you have not

overworked yourself at regular exercise, have you? ”

“No, sir, I fear that I have been neglectful of myself in that respect. No one can regret it more than I.”

A little astonished at Oscar's maturity of speech, the physician asked him some searching questions about his ancestry, his previous mode of living, and his accidents and diseases. Oscar explained with complete frankness just what kind of a sheltered existence he had led, and Dr. Rogers displayed much interest in his story. He then put the boy through a thorough examination of his heart, lungs, kidneys, eyes, ears, and feet, called one of his assistants and had Oscar weighed and measured, and saw that all the details were accurately recorded on a large yellow card. Then, after glancing over the statistics, he spoke to him in a manner which Oscar never forgot:

“Harris, so far as I can find out, you're absolutely sound physically; in fact, you have evidently inherited a frame which might make you an athlete. The trouble is that you have refused to give your body a fair chance. You have eaten unwisely, pampered yourself when you should have been out in the woods hunting or fishing,

and smoked altogether too much,—you should not smoke at all. If you had taken any systematic exercise whatever, you wouldn't be the poor soft thing you are to-day. There are boys in that line two or three years younger than you who could lay you on your back in a minute. It's a shame that a fellow with such a fine start as you have had should have become what you are now. But then there's no good in dreaming about what might have been."

"Isn't there some treatment I can follow to put myself in good condition? I'm willing to try anything."

"Yes, there is still hope. Fortunately you look as if you had some intelligence, and you evidently realize where you stand and are ambitious to improve. That's a good share of the battle. The main thing for the present is to stay outdoors all you can, stop smoking, and breathe plenty of fresh air. I'm going to assign you to the walking squad for a while, and that will give you a start."

"What is the walking squad, sir?"

"It's made up of boys who are not in condition to go out for games, like soccer and football. They take cross-country walks with one of my assistants four times a week."

“But, sir, I don’t want to be assigned to an aggregation of cripples. I’ll work day and night to make myself strong, indeed I will.”

“There’s only one straight road to health, Harris, and that is through systematic daily exercises. They ought to build you up rather rapidly, especially if you will quit smoking absolutely, eat sensible food, and give yourself plenty of sleep.”

“Is it not possible, sir, to take some extra exercises in my own room?”

“Certainly, if you like. I can give you a whole series. Only you must be careful not to go too fast, for, if you do, you may injure yourself permanently. It took you quite a while to get yourself into this condition, you know, and it may be some weeks before you feel the results. Everything depends on the determination and persistence which you show. It’s lucky for you that you have no organic weakness.”

Oscar thanked Dr. Rogers and left the Gymnasium with an inflexible resolution to make himself physically strong. His decision was bolstered up by an incident which occurred that evening in Wendell Hall. He came back to his room after dinner to find that his entire door had

disappeared, having been removed from its hinges and carried away during his absence. All his belongings were, of course, open to inspection by every passer-by. Oscar was gazing rather disconsolately at the sight and wondering what he could do to seclude himself from the public, when he heard a soft chuckle. Turning around, he saw a small stockily-built youngster named Carl Woodward grinning at him from the stairs.

"You little ruffian," shouted Oscar, in a tone which his mother would have thought decidedly unrefined. "You did this. You bring that door back or I'll break your neck. Right away, too!" For once his equanimity was really disturbed.

"Come on, four eyes!" cried the boy tauntingly in a shrill voice. "You couldn't hurt a flea!"

Enraged at this open defiance, Oscar, forgetting all discretion, rushed at his mocker, only to find him supported by a group of gleeful youngsters, all dancing up and down and thumbing their noses at him in derision. When he darted at Carl, they jumped at him and threw him to the floor, where he lay panting, with Carl perched triumphantly on his chest. Meanwhile a crowd of the older men in the dormitory had gathered, drawn by the cheers of the victors, and were gaz-

ing with amusement at the sight. Oscar's spectacles had fallen off, his hair was in disorder, and collar and necktie were askew; and the worst of it was that he could not possibly get up, no matter how frantically he struggled. He was like Gulliver captured by the Lilliputians. Even as he lay there helpless, he could not help thinking what Bull Taylor would have done under similar circumstances. Here he was, at least two years older than any one of his tormentors and a good deal taller; yet he could do nothing to defend himself. He could have wept in sheer anger and desperation.

"Look here, four eyes," said Carl, who, in spite of his five feet, six inches, was a well-knit and muscular lad who played end on his club eleven. "I'll fight you alone if these others will keep away."

"Hooray! Hooray! Fight! Fight!" shouted the ecstatic bystanders, eager to promote the combat.

"Let him up, Carl," said Joe Watson, who happened to be in the dormitory on a visit to a friend. "If there's going to be any fight, I'll arrange for it."

Carl stood up, with his friends around him.

Then Oscar struggled to his feet, a dejected figure with his shirt pulled out and blood on his face from a scratch over his eye. The spectators waited expectantly to hear what he had to say.

"Do you want to fight Carl, Oscar?" inquired Joe Watson hopefully.

"No," responded Oscar, as if bewildered. "I guess not."

"Coward! Coward!" jeered the small boys, disappointed of their fun. Oscar was just about to rouse himself to action when there was a sudden calm, and he looked up to see Mr. Randall approaching. He had heard the tumult, and had rushed up to quell the riot.

As the members of the gathering saw him coming, a few of those on the edges attempted to steal nonchalantly off, as if the whole affair were none of their business. The presence of an instructor on such an occasion is always a trifle disconcerting, and no one feels exactly at ease. Mr. Randall's entrance had been decidedly dramatic.

"This is a fine mess, gentlemen," he said ironically, looking first at the little fellows and then at Oscar's sad visage. "Go to your rooms at once. You come with me, Harris. As for you, Watson, I should think that, as a member of the

Student Council, you would have enough decency not to encourage a scene like this."

Joe, much abashed, muttered something which was inaudible; but there was really nothing for him to say. Making the best of an unpleasant predicament, he slunk off, accompanied by two or three other seniors who had come in his train. When Steve Fisher heard of Joe's part in the affair and of his ludicrous exit, he did not let him forget it for a long, long time.

Oscar obediently followed Mr. Randall back to his own room, where he changed his shirt and collar and then, rather incoherently, told his tale.

"I'll put that gang of rascals all on room probation at once," said the instructor. There were moments during the recital when he had to bite his lip to keep from laughing out loud, but he controlled himself and tried to preserve his orthodox pedagogical severity.

"Oh, please don't, sir, please don't!" begged Oscar appealingly. "It was my fault really. If I had not been such a poor excuse for a man, they would have been afraid to do it. What hurts me most is that I should have let myself be beaten by a crowd of much smaller boys. And then I didn't dare to fight. I'm a noble figure, I

am! " And then, a new idea in his mind, he went on, "Just wait for two months! I'll show them then! I'll get my revenge yet! "

"Very well! Just as you say, Harris! Only I can't have any more mob scenes like this. If you can adjust the matter between you, I won't say a word. But I will make sure that the door is put back again by to-morrow morning." With this, he left Oscar to his unhappy cogitations.

Oscar did not sleep much that night; but, when he rose the next day, he was a person animated by one dominating motive. Like a man afflicted with monomania, he became the most assiduous devotee of physical exercise in Andover. He found in a magazine the advertisement of a professional strong man, which read as follows:

"There is nothing else like my method, and there is nothing else that will as quickly or surely give you the big, bulging muscles and crushing strength that every red-blooded man wants. . . . I drive heavy nails through many layers of oak and iron with my bare hands. I am able to bend heavy steel bars into carefully worked designs. I perform feats of strength that astonish thousands with the sheer power of muscle that my system has given me; and this same method can give the same power to you."

For weeks his mail was filled with the circulars

of bare-torsoed giants, with huge knotted muscles and superhuman power, who guaranteed to transform bedridden invalids into Samsons within three months. His etchings of cathedrals were stowed away in a closet and replaced by framed photographs of great athletic heroes, like Paavo Nurmi, "Babe" Ruth, "Jack" Dempsey, and Sandow. He purchased every conceivable variety of instrument for body development, and his room became a small gymnasium. To the music of a phonograph, he took one "daily dozen" when he got up and another series before he went to bed. He laid out a schedule of diet, in which beefsteak, oatmeal, and raw eggs had a prominent place. During his vacant periods he haunted the Gymnasium, where he swung Indian clubs and dumbbells and pestered Dr. Rogers with questions on anatomy and hygiene. Four times a week he went reluctantly with the walking squad on hikes to Pomp's Pond or Prospect Hill, and was visibly annoyed when the pace was slow or the walk not long enough to suit him. Each night he went to bed tired but happy, and he was delighted to observe how well he was feeling. His studies did not suffer, for, as has been intimated, he was so quick at books that he

needed to spend very little time on his preparation.

Oscar, moreover, ceased to read "highbrow" magazines and the English classics and took up stories of the "great open spaces," where "men are men,"—books by Jack London and Rex Beach and Stewart Edward White,—books in which members of the Northwestern Mounted Police travel hundreds of miles on snowshoes through the frozen wilderness in quest of a criminal, struggling on even when they are afflicted by snow-blindness and weakened by scurvy, and finally bringing the victim back to Moose Factory to be punished. He bought tales of the prize ring, like Jack London's *The Game* and Conan Doyle's *The Croxley Master* and *Rodney Stone*. He read Dibble's *Life of John L. Sullivan* and Corbett's *The Lure of the Crowd*. What he wanted most now was "he-man" stuff, in which exhibitions of moral and physical courage were described. He used to dream that he, Alfred Tennyson Harris, was a trapper or a cowboy or a frontier desperado, indifferent to pain and unafraid of any rival. Bull Taylor used to laugh when Oscar told him some of these stories, but Oscar always ended up by saying, "Bull, I tell

you it's terrible to realize how helpless a man is unless he has a strong body. He is at the mercy of any bandit. Anybody can do anything to him he wants to."

"Even a little chap like Carl Woodward, I suppose!" chuckled Bull, who could see what was going on in Oscar's brain.

"Yes, even Carl," admitted Oscar, without smiling. "But it won't always be that way with me. Just feel that triceps, Bull! Don't you think that it's getting larger?"

And Bull, who had been making similar inspections daily, had to admit that Oscar was profiting by his course of instruction. He even was led to take an interest in football, and, on the morning of the big game with Exeter, he was just as nervous as Bull, who was one of the players. When the Andover eleven, on a slippery field, won from their rivals by a score of forty to nothing, Oscar almost went wild; and at the celebration in the evening, he insisted on being one of those to draw the triumphal car in which Steve Fisher, Joe Watson, Bull Taylor, and the other heroes of the day were borne in glory through the Andover streets. But all this has been told elsewhere, and need not be recounted again here.

Just before Thanksgiving the regular tramps of the walking squad were abandoned for the term, and Oscar formed the habit of taking long runs into the country along the woodland trails. One afternoon he happened to be passed by the cross-country squad on one of their practice jaunts, and he fell in behind the last man, wondering how long he could keep up. To his satisfaction, he found that the pace was not at all too fast for him, and he followed them without difficulty until they reached the Gymnasium, having covered at least three miles. As soon as the runners dispersed, Oscar went up to Kid Wing, the Cross-Country Captain, and asked him whether he could join the squad. Wing was a tall, rangy fellow, probably not far from twenty, who had won many prizes for distance running. Oscar had never spoken to him before.

"What's your name?" demanded Kid, looking critically at the slender, spectacled figure before him.

"Harris! I'm a 'prep,' in the senior class."

"Have you ever done any running?"

"No, not a bit. But they put me on the walking squad, and this afternoon I happened to fall in behind your cross-country bunch. I didn't

have much trouble keeping up, and I'd like to try going along with you some time."

"It's all right so far as I am concerned," answered Kid, noting with approval the length of the candidate's legs and his probable chest expansion. "But you'll have to get permission from Doc Rogers, you know."

As soon as he had taken a cold bath and a dive into the pool, Oscar called at Dr. Rogers's office in a small room near the entrance to the Gymnasium.

"So it's you again, Harris? What's the trouble now?" The "Doc" had begun to wonder why this boy had such an abnormal interest in all forms of physical development.

"Sir, I should like to go out for the cross-country team. The walking squad is over for the term, and I am sure that I can keep up with the runners."

"Let me look you over a bit," replied the physician, who really had a kindly interest in Oscar's case. He hunted out the boy's yellow record blank, glanced at the date, and then examined his heart and lungs with the stethoscope. His next step was to bring out a tape measure and jot down some of the new measurements of his chest

and arms. "Well, Harris," he said, after a study of the comparative figures, "you have unquestionably made a marvellous improvement,—greater than I ever believed to be possible. You are actually a different lad from what you were six weeks ago. If you have your heart set on running, there's no reason why you shouldn't go out with Kid Wing and his squad. But you don't want to start in too strenuously. It's just as dangerous to overdo as it is to loaf. Remember that."

"I'll try to keep that in mind, sir." And Oscar rushed down the steps of the Gymnasium, the happiest man on the Hill. He ran into Bull's room, threw his "prep" cap into the air, and shouted, "Hooray, Bull, I'm on the cross-country squad. It's come at last."

"I don't see that that's anything to make such a big noise about," replied Bull calmly. "I suppose you're glad, and all that, but I don't see exactly why. It's going to be a lot of hard plugging, without much reward. Those fellows have to work, you know."

"That's just what I'm after, Bull, my boy," exclaimed Oscar, in a mood which would have astonished his mother. "I want hard work, rav-

aging, gruelling, exhausting toil! It's wonderful!"

"All right! All right!" muttered Bull, who regarded such exuberance with cynicism. "Only don't blame me when they have to carry you in from Martin's Pond."

"They won't have a chance, Bull. I can keep up with them. I did to-day." And then he told Bull with some pride about his afternoon's adventure.

On the next afternoon when the squad was ready to start, Oscar reported to Kid Wing, who simply said, "Good, I'm glad you're here. Now you must see how long you can stand the pace. Just follow the crowd, but fall out if the distance seems too long for you. You're only beginning, you know, and it won't do to get tuckered out the first day. It's no disgrace to walk in."

Oscar discreetly made no reply, but he inwardly resolved that he would run until he dropped. As the squad started out, with Larry Spear, the assistant track coach at the head, Oscar fell into line, clad only in a sweater and running trunks, although the air was crisp and cold. In long, even strides they took a route out Salem Street, then over a fence and a stone wall into a woodland

path. Soon Oscar could feel himself breathing hard, but his legs continued to move rhythmically with the others. There came a fearful moment when it seemed as if he could go no farther; but he summoned up his will-power and kept on, until there came to him, as if by some magic gift, that mysterious power called "second wind," and his courage revived. As they swung into a hard road again, he drew nearer to the front, noticing with some satisfaction that two or three of the men who had led at first were now fatigued. Soon the Memorial Tower came in sight, and Larry Spear accelerated the pace, making a sprint for home. Oscar followed him and Kid Wing, passing several others as he ran, and, when they arrived at the Gymnasium porch, there were only three ahead of him,—Larry, Kid Wing, and Barney Wright, one of the mile-runners on the track team.

As he reached the steps, Larry and Kid turned to see who were next among the survivors.

"Great Scott!" puffed Larry, as he saw Oscar's face. "Here's a new man. Who are you, anyway?"

"I'm Harris,—just joined the squad."

"Well, that was a pretty hot pace for a green-

horn. I guess you've got the stuff in you, all right. Come and talk with me some time about running."

"Thank you, sir, I will," replied Oscar, between deep breaths.

"Aren't you tired?" inquired Kid Wing.

"Not yet," answered Oscar. "I could go a little longer, I think."

"We'll have to investigate you a little, Harris," went on Kid. "Can't you drop around to my room in Phillips to-night for a talk? I'd like to pry a little into your past."

"Sure, I'll come," replied Oscar, too happy to say more. As he shivered under the piercing needles of the icy shower a few minutes later, he wanted to burst into song. He was positive now that he could run. With the assurance that comes ultimately to every genuine athlete, he knew that he could be successful on the track, always assuming that he could develop his physique and secure the proper training. He revelled in the wholesome joy which is likely to animate any man who sees his cherished dreams about to be realized.

Kid Wing lived, as he said, in Phillips Hall, one of the oldest structures on the Hill, dating

back to the opening of the nineteenth century. In this dormitory and its companion building, Bartlet Hall, most of the leaders of the school had their quarters. On its grassy terrace, the seniors exercised their treasured privilege of outdoor smoking, and here, in the springtime, could be found those little groups of talkative idlers which, in any school, undertake to settle all the urgent problems of local and national affairs. Phillips Hall was, in a sense, a rallying point for the older undergraduates, and here most of the schemes for student government were hatched. Our old friend, Hal Manning, Managing Editor of the *Phillipian*, had a room directly across from Kid Wing's, on the third floor. They were centrally located, for the Auditorium was only a few feet away, and the Main Building was just beyond that. For economy of effort and time, a room in Phillips or Bartlet Halls was highly desirable. "Some day," Kid used to say to Hal Manning, "they'll run tunnels from Phillips over to George Washington Hall and the Main Building, and we won't have to go out into the air except to eat. Then life here will be worth while."

"When that happens," commented Hal, "this

place will be a home for aged men, and I don't want anything to do with it."

In Kid's room that evening Oscar gazed not without envy at the long array of silver cups on the mantelpiece.

"I'd give my front teeth to be able to win races the way you do!" he said, when he had taken a comfortable seat overlooking the main campus, and the lights of the houses in the distance.

"It's mostly a matter of practice, Harris. You have a fairly good build, and, so far as I can see, you're honestly ambitious. What you've got to do now is to ask Larry Spear, the coach, to tell you how to run so that you can utilize every ounce of strength. That's the only way of developing into a distance runner."

"Had you done any racing before you came here?"

"Had I? I hadn't done anything else! I come, you see, from a little village out in central New York,—Waterville, they call it,—and I used to live near a park. Every afternoon as soon as school closed some of us kids would have races around the outside of that park. I'll bet I've run around it ten thousand times. I can remember plugging and plugging until it seemed as if my

lungs would cave in, but somehow I learned to run. Luckily I had a stride that was naturally fairly good, and I didn't pick up any very bad habits."

"I suppose you were on the school track team in your village," said Oscar, with a query in his tone.

"Yes, I must have been," answered Kid reminiscently. "Should you like to hear about my first race on a real track?"

"I certainly should," replied Oscar eagerly.

"I didn't win, you know,—far from it!"

"How was that?"

"Well, here goes for the yarn!" began Kid, encouraged by the receptiveness of his audience. "You see, Waterville is a small village rather off the main line, and there had never been a track meet there. But I was in high school with a group of enterprising rascals who were always trying to start something new. One of us went to a college track meet and came back to tell the rest about it; so we wrote immediately to some schools in towns near by,—Clinton and Clayville,—and persuaded them to agree to join us. We had in Waterville an abandoned half-mile dirt track,—a survival of the days when trotting races were

popular,—and it was the logical place for the meet.

“A lot of the nervy youngsters,—‘Leaky’ Terry, Harry Yale, Charlie Coggeshall, and ‘Stew’ Mayer,—went around among the local merchants asking them to donate prizes, with the result that we accumulated quite a collection of lamps and knives and other such articles. When our committee met, we agreed that each one of us should have the privilege of choosing the prize for the event in which he was going to take part,—and which, of course, he thought he was going to win. Now I was out for the 220-yard dash, and, seeing a beautiful collapsible umbrella among our gifts, I selected that as the prize for my event. And so it was put up in one of the store windows with a big sign on it, ‘First Prize, 220-yard dash.’ I used to stop to look at it every morning on my way to school and could hardly wait till it would be mine. You see, it never entered my head that I could possibly lose.

“Well, the day of the big meet came, and the fellows from Clinton and Clayville arrived in Waterville, all in barges, waving pennants and tooting horns. There was a tremendous crowd at the race-track, for most of the townspeople were

there and we took in a lot of money at the gate. When I came out for the 220, I saw a lanky boy with 'Clinton' in red letters across his shirt, and he looked as if he could go like greased lightning. After one glance, I knew I should lose the umbrella if I didn't take precautions.

"The starter, Ernie Camp, was one of my closest pals, and I called him aside to talk the situation over. Finally we agreed on a plan which, as I see it now, was absolutely shameless; but you see we hadn't arrived at any moral sense in such matters as races. Our theory was, 'Anything to win!' According to the scheme the seven or eight of us who were in the 220 lined up,—and just as soon as we had knelt down for the start, off I went down the track. Of course the others thought that I would be called back; but, when I had gone at least ten yards, Ernie Camp, as he had promised, shot off the revolver. The Clinton fellow and the others must have been a bit amazed, but nevertheless they started off, with me at least fifteen yards ahead. I was feeling fine, legging it along as tight as I could go, and I could see the spectators in the stands waving handkerchiefs and banners. The umbrella was surely mine!

"And then, about fifty yards from the finish, I noticed somebody at my side, and there was that long-legged Clinton fellow going by me almost without any effort. I tried to sprint, but I was all in. Pretty soon another one went by, and, before I reached the tape, they had all beaten me, and I came in last. I didn't hear the end of that affair for weeks! Every time it rained somebody would want to borrow my collapsible umbrella. When I look back on it now, I realize that it was a disgraceful trick, but it was all so funny and the result was so peculiar that I can't help laughing. Our ethical standards weren't very noble, I guess! But that race did do one thing,—it taught me that I could never expect to be a sprinter, and ever since I've concentrated on the longer distances."

"Do you think I can ever win my letter, Kid?" asked Oscar, with a wistful note in his voice. "You see, I've had no experience at all. I'm just the opposite of you; I don't believe I ever ran a mile in my life before I came here."

"That's queer, too," was Kid's answer, "for the great gods built you to be a runner, Oscar. Here you are with long legs, a broad chest, and a slender waist,—what more do you want? And

you have some pluck or you wouldn't have tried to keep up with the cross-country squad. All you need now is training and experience. I don't want to raise any false hopes, but you have a mighty good chance of wearing an 'A' on your jersey next spring."

This was sufficient encouragement for Oscar, who left Kid's room as proud as if he had just been named as ambassador to England. He knew that he had persistence enough to keep going; it was now mainly a question of how much physical endowment he could rely on. Happily he was beginning to reap the reward of his hard and regular bodily exercise. During the last few days of the term, while the final examinations were being held, all competitive sports were discontinued, and the athletes had a well-earned rest,—especially the track men, who were entirely willing to have a few unoccupied afternoons. But Oscar did not relax for a single afternoon. With a steadiness and vigor which astonished those who saw what he was doing, he spent his vacant periods in exercise. When several inches of snow covered the ground, making the roads too heavy for travel, he had recourse to the indoor track. He still, moreover, kept up his efforts to enlarge

his muscles, using dumbbells and parallel bars to good effect. By the close of the term he had added ten pounds to his weight and two inches to his chest expansion; and he bounded out of bed each morning feeling like a prince, as if the world had been created anew for his delight. It is a good feeling.

On the last evening of the fall term, when all his examinations but one had been taken, Oscar, after an intimate chat with Kid Wing, came back to Wendell Hall about nine o'clock. It was a glorious night. Strolling slowly across the campus from Phillips Hall, Oscar glimpsed through the bare branches of the ghostly elms the twinkling lights from a hundred windows. The light snow had obliterated the harsher features of the landscape, and the full moon, throwing a soft glow over hedges and brick walls, made it appear uniformly beautiful. The slender shaft of the Memorial Tower stood out against the stars, the top looking incredibly graceful. For a moment Oscar lingered, marvelling at the magic of the spectacle, which to him was finer than any he could recall in Florence or Granada. In that mood he felt a kind of inspiration. To him, as to the young Wordsworth:

“The whole earth
The beauty wore of promise; that which sets
The budding rose above the rose full blown.”

In this spirit of exaltation, Oscar reached Wendell Hall, mounted the stairs to his room, and fumbled for his key, only to find that the door-knob was covered with some sticky and obnoxious substance,—probably molasses. As he swore softly under his breath,—Oscar was not above a mild brand of profanity,—he heard muffled noises from a dark corner and realized that his ancient enemies, the smaller boys, were hidden there, laughing at his discomfiture.

This time, however, there was no hesitation. With a rush, he darted into the shadows, seized two of the culprits,—one of whom proved to be the irrepressible Carl Woodward,—and, dragging them out under the center light, proceeded to knock their heads together. Two others at once attacked him from some other place of concealment, but Oscar stood upright and fought them all off, finally hurling them from him with no uncertain vigor. “Help! Help!” cried Carl, writhing in pain as Oscar twisted his arm. Boys emerged one by one from rooms near by; others

rushed up-stairs from the corridor below, until nearly everybody in the dormitory had assembled to watch the fun; and the crowd lustily goaded on the combatants. "Go to it, Oscar!" shouted Bull Taylor, who was overjoyed to see his friend holding his own against such adverse odds. "Put the young shrimps out of business for good. Now's the time to do it!"

Vainly the two smaller lads, who were more amazed than anybody at Oscar's sudden transformation, tried to escape. He held them in an iron grip until they begged whiningly for mercy. And then, just at this critical point in the proceedings, up came "Weary" Randall, clad in a dressing-gown and in no placid mood. The uproar had been tremendous, and he was quite prepared to burst in upon the assembly like an avenging deity. But, when he saw the spectacle before him, his anger cooled and he could not help smiling. Oscar, his glasses over one ear and his hair looking like a deserted bird's nest, was posed in the middle of the circle in the attitude of the Colossus of Rhodes, with a small boy held tightly by the scruff of the neck in each hand, both shrieking madly, "I give in, Oscar! I give in! Let me go! I won't bother you any more, Oscar!" Beyond

any doubt, Oscar was complete master of the situation.

Mr. Randall was so deeply absorbed in the combat that he did not observe what a sensation his appearance was making. One by one shadowy figures were sneaking away, until only Oscar and his assailants remained,—Oscar, who was so much excited that he was completely oblivious to everything around him, and the small lads, who could not possibly retreat. At last Oscar's eyes fell on Mr. Randall, and he slowly relaxed his clutch. The youngsters shook themselves, and Oscar awkwardly tried to smooth his hair and adjust his collar. Then he saw the smile on Mr. Randall's countenance, and the semblance of a grin appeared on his own face.

"Well, Harris, you're getting to be a genuine bruiser, aren't you?" said Mr. Randall, in a tone which began by being severe but ended in a kindly manner. "And you're here, too, Woodward! Just as it was earlier in the fall. What's the matter with you, Carl? Are you trying to pick a fight with Harris the way you did in September?"

"No, I guess not, sir," responded Carl, who was evidently much chagrined at his position. "May I go down and change my clothes, sir?"

“You’d better ask Oscar, Carl,” was the instructor’s answer. “He seems to be in command just now.”

Carl looked at Mr. Randall to find out whether the latter was in earnest, but he could discern no signs of relenting. Finally, in a rather forced and feeble voice, he turned to Oscar, saying, “May I go now, Oscar?” The situation was so ridiculous that Mr. Randall had to turn his face away.

“Yes, go,” replied Oscar, disposed to be lenient. “But don’t let this kind of thing occur again. Oh, yes,—I almost forgot,—suppose you and Pete clean off my door-knob.”

“Can’t we wait a few minutes until we get fixed up?” inquired Pete.

“‘Now,’ I said! ‘Now’!” And the two boys almost ran for water and soap.

When they had completed this cleansing job to Oscar’s satisfaction, the house master dismissed them with a reprimand, and then addressed Oscar. “Well, Harris, you’ve won your own victory, and I’m glad of it. Now you must remember not to overdo the thing. You’ve shown these little chaps that they can’t make a fool of you. It’s your business now to keep from becoming a bully. Furthermore, I’m not going to allow Wendell Hall

to become the stage for any more such rough-houses. I've helped you a little; now you pitch in and help me. Will you do that?"

"I certainly will, sir," answered Oscar, with vigor. And Mr. Randall knew that the boy meant what he said.

CHAPTER V

THE HERO LEARNS BY EXPERIENCE

LIKE most of the new men at Andover, Oscar was completely ignorant of the secret societies there, and not for some weeks was he aware of the significant part which they played in the life of the academy. Before she went away, his mother had handed him a jewelled pin, upon which were the mysterious letters "K. P. N.," and explained that she had found this among Mr. Harris's possessions after his death.

"I don't know what these letters mean," she continued, "but it was your father's when he was a boy at Andover, and you ought to have it. I remember that he was very careful of it, and that he once told me that it indicated membership in some sort of club. You had better put it away in your jewel case. It may come in handy later."

It was rather extraordinary that Oscar, at this particular stage of his career, did not create a sensation by wearing this ornament conspicuously on his coat lapel, but he fortunately had enough

sense to lock it up and forget about it. The average "prep" is unlikely to hear much society gossip; and Oscar, during his early weeks at school, kept very much to himself. He did discover that some gloomy and impressive-looking structures, into which no one could ever be seen entering, were society houses, but his curiosity did not lead him to make further inquiries. Once he walked past the K. P. N. house,—an imposing brick building, sealed up like a tomb, with a porch supported by tall white pillars,—and speculated idly as to what it must be like inside. But there were other matters which, by that time, seemed to him to have far greater importance,—how he was to increase his chest expansion, for instance, and how he could win an "A" on the track.

When a "freak" like Oscar is admitted to Andover, the news spreads like village gossip, and there are always some boisterous blades who are ready to take advantage of such tempting innocence. Thus it was that on an evening in late November, two of the school humorists, "Dusty" Sandford and "Matt" White, dressed in the most formal attire,—which means that each, in addition to the necessary covering garments, wore a stiff linen collar and carried a stick,—knocked at

Oscar's door. When they had been invited to enter, they stepped in with ostentatious ceremony, and Oscar, who was still very green, urged them to be seated. As a host, Oscar was quite in his element, and, when the initial embarrassment had disappeared, he made his visitors feel very much at home, even proposing to brew them some tea. At last, when the conversation languished for a moment, Dusty opened the way to real business.

"Harris," he began solemnly, "you have doubtless been wondering why we are here. My name is Sandford, and this gentleman with me is Mr. White,—Mr. Matthew W. White, a member of the Society of Mayflower Descendants. We happen to be representatives of one of the secret organizations here in Andover,—Sigma Eta Mu,—probably the oldest fraternal group in any school in this country. We take in, as you may readily believe, only men who have had some experience in the world. To put it bluntly, Harris, we rather pride ourselves on our exclusiveness. We never, for instance, should dream of taking a man simply because he is an athlete or a team manager. Our members must have blue blood in their veins and know how to conduct themselves anywhere among the best people."

"That sounds interesting," commented Oscar, a little flattered and yet somewhat suspicious. Dusty was a very persuasive talker.

"We have looked up your ancestry somewhat, and we have been studying your manners and dress as you appear on the campus. We are convinced that we should be making no mistake in asking you to join our select group; and therefore we have the honor of extending to you a formal invitation to become a member of Sigma Eta Mu."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Sandford. I appreciate your courtesy. Must I give you my decision right away?"

"Decision!" ejaculated Dusty, producing an excellent imitation of a kind-hearted friend very much insulted. "No Andover man has ever declined an invitation to our organization! It is inconceivable that you should refuse such a distinction! Don't you realize that there can be, under our constitution, only thirteen members a year from the student body! Why, there are fathers who would give thousands of dollars to have their sons make Sigma Eta Mu!" Dusty pronounced the mystic words in a loud whisper which had a very weird effect.

So horrified did the two callers look at the mere suggestion of a possible refusal that Oscar was disinclined to argument and gave his assent without any further delay. Sandford then asked him to write his check for fifty dollars, as an initiation fee,—the story of his generosity to the Society of Inquiry had spread over the campus,—and, when Oscar opened his mouth to protest, he was confronted by stern glances from Dusty and Matt. The latter, who had hitherto said nothing, now began: “You will receive in return for this lucre a jewelled pin after the initiation has been completed. We do not approve of delays in matters of this kind. Therefore on to-morrow evening at seven o’clock, after consuming only a glass of milk for dinner, you will take your position in a standing posture against the burial vault in Spring Grove Cemetery, facing towards the setting sun. There you will be examined by the Great Mogul, who will give you further instructions. A suitable costume will be brought you at noon to-morrow. Farewell, victim, farewell! And speak to no one regarding this, under penalty of dire punishment!”

After the two ringleaders had made impressive bows and departed, Oscar sat a long time in deep

thought. He was, it must be remembered, wholly uninformed regarding fraternities. He wanted to consult Bull Taylor, but Matt's final warning kept ringing in his ears. There were moments when he was so suspicious that he resolved not to proceed farther; but then there came to him the painful doubt that he might be foolishly rejecting a significant honor. In the end he resolved to go through with the initiation, no matter what resulted. At the worst, it could be nothing more than a fairly expensive joke.

At half-past six that evening, Oscar sneaked softly out of his room, little aware that virtually every eye in the dormitory was upon him as, in the gathering twilight, he made his way across the fields and into the woods, at a point where a well-worn path led to the cemetery and Pomp's Pond. He was indeed garbed in a strange manner: on his head a brown derby hat, at least two sizes larger than was necessary; on his back an old black cutaway coat, which had been resurrected from some attic in town; and his thin legs adorned with linen knickerbockers, so that he resembled a gentleman of the old colonial school out for a walk. But Oscar did not walk! Obeying detailed instructions, he assumed a dog-trot at once,

and jogged along, grasping the unmanageable derby in one hand to keep it from falling over his eyes,—altogether the queerest shape that had ever passed along that route. At last, his heart thumping with excitement, he reached the designated spot and took up his position facing the glowing globe of flame in the western sky.

Night fell gradually over the countryside. In the distance Oscar could hear the bells from the Memorial Tower faintly chiming the quarter-hour, their notes sounding like a mournful tinkle in the quiet air. The tombstones around him accentuated the gloom in his heart, and he felt more and more nervous. He had almost no superstitions; yet none of us is fond of graveyards, and nobody is likely to choose one as a site for a summer cottage. Slowly the shadows deepened. The monotonous song of the tree-toads became a low humming, and an owl hooted in the branches of an oak near by. Oscar started at a sudden noise, only to discover that it was simply the light wind moving among the dead leaves over his head.

And then, when it seemed as if he had been waiting for an eternity, and his legs were commencing to feel prickly, a tall figure in white towered above him as if it had risen out of a grave,—

silent, motionless, dreadful! From which direction it had arrived, Oscar could not tell; but there it was, with one long arm stretched towards the heavens. A chill struck at Oscar's heart. He was as brave as anybody, but the long, anxious period of suspense and the chilly night air had worn on his nerves. His knees trembling and his teeth chattering, he listened to hear what might be said. But the ghostly form stood speechless! It merely turned, lowered its arm slightly, and pointed; then it gestured slowly, like the spirit of Hamlet's father, indicating that Oscar should follow. As it moved off majestically through the shadows, he was conscious of other spectral shapes around him, and could occasionally catch a glint of white through the trees. It was all very alarming, especially to one who, like Oscar, had just been reading *Hamlet* in his English class and could quote verbatim:

“I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes like stars start from their
spheres,
Thy knotted and combined locks to part
And each particular hair stand up on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.”

Oscar, feeling his way gingerly through the

darkness in the wake of his taciturn guide, moved slowly along until he reached what he recognized as the highway on the western side of the cemetery. Here the sheeted figure motioned him peremptorily to halt, and two by no means gentle hands tied a bandage over his eyes,—so tightly that, even if it had been broad daylight, he could have seen nothing. Then he was hurried along, through bushes and briars and over stone walls, for what seemed to him miles and miles. Would they never let him rest? At last, after a steep descent, they paused, and an ominous silence fell, while Oscar wondered where he was.

“Victim,” said a strident voice, “you are now poised on the edge of a precipice overhanging the lake, which lies fifty feet below. You are to jump and then swim for shore,—if by chance you escape being mangled on the rocks at the base of the cliff. This is the supreme test of your courage and vitality. If you emerge alive, even though badly hurt, you will be deemed worthy of becoming a member of the ancient order of Sigma Eta Mu.”

Under cover of the darkness, Oscar smiled to himself. There were limits even to his credulity, and this kind of stuff seemed childish to him. He

thought the situation out deliberately, resolved that he would make no such leap as was proposed, and came to a decision as to what he should do.

“Now, unhappy victim,” announced the leader, addressing him, “when I count three, spring with all your strength so that you may avoid the jagged stones on the shore below and will reach the deep water in safety. Are you ready? One! Two! Three!”

As the last word rang out, Oscar bent his knees and jumped,—not forward, however, but backwards, in accordance with his resolution. But the consequences of this unexpected action were decidedly dramatic. He had really been standing on the bank of the Shawsheen River, facing away from the stream, and his tormentors, while hoping to duck him later beneath its chilling waters, had supposed that he would now give a prodigious leap and fall to the earth, like the blind Gloucester in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. Instead, Oscar, thinking to be shrewd, had done exactly the wrong thing. He had thrown himself backwards into the river, at a point where it was well over his head. For a few seconds the crowd stood as if paralyzed. Then Oscar reappeared, cried desperately, “Help! Help!” and sank again.

Now at last everybody was aroused. Sheets were discarded, gallant rescuers leaped wildly into the stream, and there were frenzied shouts of "Here he is!" "No, he's gone down again!" and "Dive for him, Matt." The water seemed to be alive with wriggling, twisting human beings. At last one of them emerged on the bank, his hands tenaciously twined in Oscar's hair. The half-unconscious boy was dragged higher up, and there ensued some furious efforts at resuscitation, which were broken off by groans from the 'initiate. "Leave me alone, will you! I'm all right! Let me up, you fools! I can swim, but of course I couldn't get out when you kept knocking me under trying to save my life." Oscar gradually rid himself of the liquid which he had involuntarily swallowed, and finally stood up, looking very damp and dismal, but still alive.

"Why did you jump that way, you poor fish?" indignantly inquired one of the committee. "You've ruined the show!"

"What do you mean,—fish?" asked Oscar, in no mild humor, having never heard this expressive slang phrase. "I didn't choose to go into the water, did I?"

"Well, you leaped into it, didn't you?"

"Yes, but I only did it to fool you," was Oscar's logical reply.

"And you came mighty near having a watery grave, young man. And the school would have had to bury you and put flowers on your coffin, and you aren't worth it."

"What'll I do now?" inquired Oscar, a little wearily. "Have I got to climb another cliff?"

"Don't be sarcastic, victim. You'd better run back to your dormitory. This performance is herewith concluded."

"But I don't know the road," pleaded Oscar. It was a sensible remark, for the night was now so black that not a landmark could be picked out in any direction. It was absolutely impossible to discern any path.

"You just trail after me," spoke up a voice which Oscar recognized as Hal Manning's. "I'll show you, if you will try to keep up."

Off they went, dripping water at every step. It was a miserable parade, for it was chilly in the night air and no one felt like breaking into song. After stumbling twenty times over fallen logs and scratching his legs and face on briars, Oscar reached Wendell Hall. He had been cautioned to enter quietly, in the hope that Mr. Randall

had not made his customary round of the rooms. Luckily for Oscar, the master had been out to dinner, and Oscar was able to reach his study without being detected. There he quickly disrobed, took a steaming bath, and went to bed, only to be haunted by spectral shapes and sepulchral voices.

On the following morning, after the church service was over, Oscar was glancing through the interminable pages of the Sunday paper when there were three heavy knocks on his door, and in tramped Dusty and Matt, accompanied by Hal Manning. They stood in silence before him for several minutes. Then Dusty, having made the desired impression, stepped forward and said,—“Harris, you have not been obedient to the commands of the Grand Mogul. You have brought ridicule on our sacred ritual and displayed an unseemly spirit of levity. Nevertheless it has been decided by the Supreme Council in solemn conclave assembled that you must be created a regular member of Sigma Eta Mu. I therefore take pleasure in decorating you, in the presence of these witnesses, with the insignia of our fraternity.” Saying these words, he pinned on the lapel of Oscar’s coat a tin emblem, representing a

donkey's head, and then stepped off to study the effect.

"And now, Brother Big Fatima," he continued, turning to Hal, whose face was suspiciously crimson, "will you whisper in the ear of the novice the motto of our order?"

Manning bowed low, saluted, and said, "Brother Little Fatima, I obey." Then, approaching Oscar, he said in a low but perfectly audible tone, "Brother Lucky Strike, our motto, never to be spoken above a whisper, is Sigma Eta Mu,—SNATCH EASY MONEY!"

With this disclosure, Manning and his companions bent low in mock reverence and withdrew from the room, before Oscar had time to regain his senses. He had, of course, realized for some time that he had been the victim of a hoax, and he was glad that the program was over.

The tale of the previous evening's adventures was certain to leak out sooner or later, and ultimately it reached the ears of the Head. It is amazing how rapidly under some conditions gossip of this kind travels in a school community. That gentleman was sorely tempted to place the matter in the hands of the Student Council; but, when he heard all the details, he was convinced

that the conspirators had been sufficiently punished by their wetting, and he contented himself with sending word that Oscar's fifty dollars must be refunded. Oscar himself was reticent regarding the episode, but he counted it as another phase of his education. He resolved then and there never again to accept without question what was told to him by a stranger. And there was a further incidental consequence which, in after years, Oscar was inclined to look back upon as one of the significant events of his life.

Oscar had found none of his classes dull, but that which he had enjoyed most was the one conducted by Professor Foster,—affectionately known to the boys as "Charlie,"—in Virgil's *Æneid*. He was a man of wide experience and broad culture, who brought to bear upon his subject the scholarship of a lifetime of reading and travel. He had a keen wit and a robust humor,—qualities which were lavishly displayed in his classroom. He loved to jest about his portliness, and often referred to his "rotund personality" and the fact that he was a "well-rounded" man. It was said of him by the alumni that his course in Senior Latin was a liberal education. Irreproachable in dress and manners, he treated his students

as if they were his equals as gentlemen, and, by so doing, drew from them their very best efforts. For him Oscar had an admiration not far from idolatry, but, in characteristic Andover fashion, the boy repressed his feelings, merely sitting attentive through the recitations. He had no idea that Professor Foster knew him at all outside the Pearson Hall classroom until one day that teacher, calling him to the desk after the hour, invited him to dinner on the following evening. Oscar, made a little timid by his earlier experiences, accepted rather shyly, not without a suspicion that this too might turn out to be a joke.

When he first came to Andover, Oscar would have entered Professor Foster's home with the air of a man of the world, familiar with all the correct usages of society; now, however, he was a little less sure of himself, and he seemed for the first few moments to be diffident and even awkward. But he found Mrs. Foster so gracious and Professor Foster so entertaining that he could not help regaining his old confidence; and it was not long before he was chatting in an easy way about paintings which he had seen in the Paris galleries and even describing the serrated crags of Montserrat. The Fosters had travelled everywhere and

seen everything, and they paid Oscar the flattering compliment of assuming that he was one with them in their appreciation of works of art. Their house, which was some little distance from the academy buildings, was furnished with exquisite things, many of them bought in Europe, and Oscar found pleasure in picking out some which had for him an especial appeal. For a time, indeed, he forgot completely his athletic aspirations; indeed he could almost believe that he was no longer a schoolboy, but just a friend among friends.

After a dinner which made Oscar feel as if he had returned to Paris and its delicacies, Professor Foster took Oscar into his library, a room lined with bookshelves almost to the ceiling, offered him a cigarette,—which the potential mile-runner regretfully declined,—and motioned him to a great leather-covered chair, into which he sank until he felt as if he were disappearing from view. Then, lighting a cigar and inhaling the fragrant aroma, the teacher said, “Well, my boy, you’ve been having some rather painful experiences, haven’t you?”

“Oh, nothing to speak of, sir,” answered Oscar. “It’s good for me, I guess, to learn what the

world is like. I had led what people call a 'sheltered existence' until I came here. Sooner or later I should have had to confront the real thing, and I'm rather glad that I've had some of the conceit and ignorance knocked out of me. But I didn't dream that anybody on the faculty had heard of my troubles."

"There's very little that escapes our Argus-eyed teachers. Often we can't say anything about what we see or hear, but we know a great deal more than you fellows imagine. I've been told all about your initiation, for instance, and the ducking you gave the others. That couldn't have been such bad fun."

"Yes, it was rather a joke on them, now that I think about it. But I hope that the faculty won't want to punish those fellows, sir. They didn't mean any harm, and the whole affair was good for me. Why, one of them even came yesterday and handed me back the check for fifty dollars I had given him. That was a mighty white thing to do."

The Professor listened thoughtfully to what Oscar was saying. He wanted to be very careful what he said in reply. Then he began, "No, you don't need to worry about that. They'll escape

this time, even though they may be a bit apprehensive. But, in connection with that, I do want to talk to you for just a moment. You've been brought up to know a good deal about art and architecture and music, and to love beautiful things. Don't abandon all that just because a crowd of average young Americans make fun of you. The trouble with most schools in this country is that there is a tendency for the students to develop in exactly the same way, to grow to be alike in their tastes and habits and desires. I've been watching you ever since you entered my class, and there's fine stuff in you if only you refuse to let yourself become standardized. That's the curse of our time,—this eagerness to turn out products like Ford cars, all alike, with interchangeable parts. I want you to be a Cadillac or a Pierce Arrow, different from the others and better than they are. Of course you'll have to conform in clothes and language to those with whom you associate every day; but don't you let your soul be turned into a mould. Keep your individuality."

"Professor Foster, you've said just what I've thought a hundred times since I reached this place. It's wonderful here. There are beautiful

buildings and able teachers and everything a fellow can ask for. The only fear I have is that I may forget some of the things I used to know. Just now I'm interested in developing my body and becoming an athlete, and I'm going to be a runner if it can possibly be done. But that isn't all there is to life. When I'm out here with Mrs. Foster and you, I am sure that it is right to like cathedrals and listen to grand opera. And then I get back and, when I hear some of the fellows in the 'dorm' talk contemptuously about 'high-brows,' I feel foolish."

"It's the same in all schools, Harris. As a matter of fact, things are better here at Andover than in almost any other place I know. The trouble is that we teachers have to plan courses for the average man, and the exceptional fellow has to shift for himself. But you have too much character to let yourself be smothered by mediocrity, I'm sure. And you can become one of the boys, and win prizes in running, without letting your real self be cramped. Whenever you get despondent about it all, come out to see me and we'll talk it over."

There was much other talk before this memorable evening was over, but enough has been reproduced to show its general trend. When Oscar

rose to say "Good-night!" he felt that he had never spent a more wholesome or stimulating two hours. As he walked back to Wendell Hall across the fields, the world looked rosier than it had appeared at any time since he had been left in Andover. When he reached his room, he looked for a moment at a huge photograph of Jack Dempsey, the boxer, which had replaced an engraving of Toledo Cathedral between his windows. Then, with an ejaculation of impatience, he tore it down from the wall, hunted in his closet for the discarded cathedral, and, when he had found it, hung it up carefully in its original position. "That's better," he said, with a sigh of relief, "and it's a good deal more like me!"

Such is the influence which one personality can exert unconsciously upon another. And "Charlie" Foster does not know to this day how much comfort and inspiration he brought to one half-discouraged Andover senior.

CHAPTER VI

THE HERO BECOMES A GOOD SAMARITAN

WITH all his "queerness" and gullibility, the heir to the Harris fortunes was something of a judge of men. He had wandered into so many strange corners of continental cities and had met so many varieties of Russians and Albanians and Turks that he was not astonished at anything or anybody. Furthermore, he was mature morally as well as mentally. There was with him, for example, no temptation to go through the process colloquially known as "sowing wild oats." When he saw occasionally at Andover representatives of the so-called "sporting classes" trying desperately to "see life," he was neither alarmed nor offended, because he was not unacquainted with their experiments in vice. The students who sat daringly on the fire-escape smoking cigarettes in defiance of school regulations aroused in him nothing but pity for their childishness. Once, when some would-be "bad men" tried to lure him into a game of bridge, thinking that he would prove

profitable prey, he yielded and showed such mastery of the game that they did not ask him again. As it happened, bridge was a pastime which he had learned from his mother and her friends, and, although he did not care for gambling, he played with quickness and skill.

Oscar's pride was vulnerable only in matters with which he was unacquainted. He was like a Bowery urchin on a farm, unable to milk the cows or saddle the horses and easily deceived by the dullest rustic. With the theatre, the ballet, and the revue Oscar had been familiar ever since he had put on long trousers, and he could derive no thrill from going to a burlesque show or wandering around the back alleys of Puritanical Boston. Had he not prowled alone through Montmartre at midnight and explored the mysteries of the Quartier Latin?

In many respects, as Professor Foster had ascertained, Oscar was much more civilized than the seniors with whom he was associated, and they often seemed to him like a tribe of barbarians. They displayed little interest, so far as he could discover, in good music, and the majority stubbornly resisted the patient attempts of Dr. Schleiermacher, the Director of Music, to teach

them to discriminate between the Fifth Symphony and "Yes, we have no bananas!" Only a few cared anything about painting or sculpture. With literature, perhaps, it was a trifle different because no one could be "exposed," so to speak, to plays like *Hamlet* and lyrics like *Tears, Idle Tears*, without getting some conception of what great poetry is like; but the average boy had not progressed in his literary tastes much beyond the *Saturday Evening Post*. Oscar's delight in church architecture and stained-glass windows and Chopin preludes would have aroused the scorn and laughter of his classmates if he had been so innocent as to disclose it. What they liked best was sport in all its forms, especially outdoor games; their chosen mental recreation was the "movies"; and their stock diversion in their idle hours was the so-called humorous paper, represented by *Judge* and *College Comics*. Oscar, with the sensitiveness and canniness of youth, perceived the desirability of concealing his own artistic tastes, and mastered the secret of appearing to be something he was not. He did not, it is true, adopt the banal avocations of some of his companions; but, from all outward signs, he was by Christmas in dress and bearing a normal,

healthy American boy, with a horror of being considered "different."

Bull Taylor,—although he would have been amazed to hear it,—was for Oscar a source of inspiration. Day after day, with his slow-moving mind, he kept driving at matters which had for him hardly any intrinsic interest, simply because he was in pursuit of that indefinable thing called an education. As the two became better acquainted, Oscar saw that he could readily help Bull, and he formed the habit of dropping into his room in the evening and hearing him in his Geometry and Latin. Bull was left tackle on the football team, and it was important for the eleven that he keep off the "no-excuse list." Although very few heard anything about it, it was only Oscar's persistent coaching that maintained Bull's eligibility for the Andover-Exeter game,—in which, it may be added, he performed prodigious feats of skill, especially in breaking holes through which Steve Fisher and the other backs could make long gains. During the celebration of the great victory, everybody, including the Head himself, praised Bull for his brilliant showing; but Bull did not fail to remember that he could never have played on that team if it had not been for

the almost continuous prodding which Oscar had administered to his pupil's sluggish mentality.

"Say, Oscar, how am I going to thank you?" he asked in an embarrassed way, on the Sunday morning after the contest, as the two sat surrounded by newspapers describing the game. "Here you've done most of the hard labor, and I get all the credit. I'll swear that it's a tougher job making me pass 'Charlie' Foster's *Virgil* than it is to run for a touchdown through a broken field. Look at this headline,—'FISHER AND TAYLOR DESTROY EXETER'S DEFENSE.' Somebody ought to produce the truth, 'HARRIS DRAGS TAYLOR THROUGH GEOMETRY.' That would be really accurate."

"Oh, cut it out!" answered Oscar, who had by this date acquired some slang which would have alarmed his precise mother. "Going over the stuff with you helped me, too. I had to do it myself, anyhow, didn't I? You aren't a bone-head, anyway. It's just that books come hard to you, that's all."

"You're the real thing in friends, and I'm for you, whatever you do. I only hope that I get a chance some day to do you a favor."

"You will, Bull. Forty years from now, when

you're a member of Morgan and Company and are putting through a billion dollar airplane merger, I'll drop in on you and borrow carfare."

"If that time ever comes, you'll get whatever you want,—that is, if I have it. I'll guarantee that."

In making plans for his Christmas vacation, Oscar had followed his mother's instructions and had agreed to go to Philadelphia as the guest of his Uncle Henry, his mother's brother, who was a wealthy merchant in that city. It occurred to him that he could, perhaps, have Bull included in the invitation, but the latter, when the plan was suggested, declined rather forcibly.

"What could I do in a place like that?" he asked. "I haven't even got a dinner coat, to say nothing of a pair of dancing-shoes. I'd be a swell sort of a friend to introduce to Philadelphia society, I would! No, I'm going to New York for a day or two and see Mr. Simmons, the man who helped me come to Andover; and then, after Christmas, I shall come back here and study. I need to, I guess."

"Oh, come on, Bull! You don't know my uncle. He wouldn't care whether you wore a Tuxedo or a khaki sweater. He's a regular fellow,

—fought all through the War, and goes hunting in Africa. He likes people, not clothes.”

“That’s all right. There won’t be any battle or any lion-hunt in Philadelphia this Christmas—nothing but ‘tea fights.’ I’m going on my own.” And Bull refused to listen to any further arguments.

During the last three days of the fall term, there was a regular schedule of final examinations, and it seemed to Oscar as if life were just one test after another. On Thursday morning, however, it was all over, and Oscar went with Bull to Boston just as soon as they could catch a train. On the way to town, Oscar discovered that Bull had planned to ride in a day coach to New York; and it speaks volumes for Oscar’s tact that he never faltered, but bought his ticket in the same way, although he had not imagined that anybody ever took a journey of five hours except in a Pullman car. It was his first lesson in “how the other half live.”

The two parted company in the Grand Central Station, and Oscar went on to Philadelphia, where he spent the next three weeks. He was very fond of his aunt and uncle, and they, in their turn, undertook to make the hours pass pleasantly. His

Uncle Henry, who was a bluff, outspoken man, did not hesitate to congratulate him on his improvement. "Great Scott, Alfred, you look as if you were going to be an athlete. What has happened to you? When I saw you last fall, you were a poor, spindly thing; now you've filled out in the chest, and your cheeks are ruddy. That Andover must be a pretty good kind of school."

"You bet it is," said Oscar, who had not been called Alfred for three months. "It's the finest little spot on earth, and I sure am glad that Mother sent me there."

"She hesitated a long time before she did," replied Uncle Henry. "She thought it was too rough a place for you."

"It was just what I needed, Uncle Henry," went on Oscar. "I was the worst prig on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. I may not be much better now, but Andover is responsible for whatever change there is."

"Well, all I can say now is that your mother is in for a big surprise. I just hope that I'll be around when you meet."

If some of Oscar's former tormentors, like Hal Manning and Joe Watson, could have seen him at tea dances in the Bellevue-Stratford, moving

unembarrassed in the best society, they would have been overcome by his poise and ease of manner. He was back in his own environment once more, where his virtues were recognized and his defects seemed unimportant. Vacation was a continuous succession of theatre parties, balls, concerts, and teas, with a few dinners scattered in the program here and there. Oscar's one sorrow was that he had very little opportunity to keep up his running, but his Uncle Henry, who had been an oarsman at New Haven, assured him that the respite would be good for him. He did, however, take some long walks in the park, and occasionally he would break into a jog-trot on the long level stretches. He was careful also not to eat rich cakes and pastries, and he managed to get plenty of sleep in the morning when he had been out late the night before. His Uncle Henry watched him with some amusement, but with inward delight at the transformation which had taken place.

The climax of the holiday season was a Junior League ball, attended by what seemed to Oscar to be thousands of young men and women from schools and colleges. He was standing in the crowd of "stags" on one side of the ballroom when he saw Steve Fisher in a corner by him-

self, evidently very much bored. Not quite certain whether he ought to be the one to claim acquaintance, Oscar waited a moment; but soon Steve turned, and, when he caught sight of Oscar, he came eagerly in the latter's direction.

"Why, hello, Oscar," he cried, as he seized his hand. "I didn't expect to see you in this part of the world."

"Yes, my uncle lives here, and I'm staying with him until Andover opens. Is your home in Philadelphia?"

"No, I just came down from New York for this dance," replied Steve. "My home is in Montana, you know, and I've been spending the vacation with a fellow out in Englewood. He's the one that dragged me here. The only trouble is that neither one of us knows many of these girls."

"Is that so?" said Oscar. "Why don't you let me introduce you? I've often been here to visit my relatives, and I can lead you to some beauties."

Steve, just a trifle skeptical, gave his assent, and it is to be recorded that Oscar fulfilled his promise. Within half an hour Steve had met some of the most charming girls he had ever seen, and was having an enthralling time,—at a dance

which, an hour before, had appeared very dull. Before the evening was over he came up to Oscar in a manner more ingratiating than he had yet shown, slapped him cordially on the shoulder, and said, "See here, old top, you've certainly done me a good turn, and I appreciate it. You seem to be the whole bag of potatoes down in this 'burg.' Your name is good for a million dollars." It is certain that Steve, when he returned to Andover, had something to tell Hal and Joe of Oscar's lofty position in the social world. This reputation did not injure Oscar in the slightest.

Oscar had had a delightful holiday, but being anxious to get back to his running, he was not at all regretful when the time came to report at Andover. His Uncle Henry, who had enjoyed him immensely, did not like to have him depart. But the "Good-byes!" had to be said, and he soon found himself among old school friends on the Knickerbocker going from New York to Boston. There had been almost no snow in Pennsylvania, but, when he stepped off the Boston and Maine train at the Andover station, there was at least two feet of it on the ground, and everything looked very wintry. "I'll have to do all my running indoors," thought the boy, as he

was jolted up the rutted hill in a taxicab and stared out of the windows at the drifts along the trolley tracks. Fortunately he had a new raccoon coat which his thoughtful mother had insisted on purchasing before she sailed; and Oscar had to confess that it was not at all uncomfortable now. When the cab stopped in front of Wendell Hall, he looked cheerfully around at the now familiar scenes, stepped out into the midst of a group of his dormitory mates, and then rushed up-stairs to Bull's room. As he burst in the door without knocking,—his mother would have termed his manners atrocious,—he saw Bull in his desk-chair, leaning over with his head on his arms, a picture of unredeemed dejection. At Oscar's blustery entrance, he jumped up quickly and tried rather pathetically to assume a gay expression.

"Why, hello, you old reprobate," he shouted with something of his usual boisterousness. "I'm glad to see you back. Steve Fisher tells me that you're the king of Philadelphia cotillion leaders. Sit down and tell me all about it."

"I'm fine, of course," answered Oscar, who could see at once that something was wrong. "But what's the trouble with you? You look like the last rose of summer! Are you sick?"

"No, I guess not."

"Well, what is the matter? You are a regular winter gloom."

"It's nothing that you can help, kiddo."

"Say, why don't you loosen up and tell a fellow? If you've stolen a watch or poisoned anybody's soup, I'll keep mum."

"It isn't really very much, I suppose," responded Bull at last. "It's just that I can't stay in Andover any longer."

"Can't stay here! I thought you liked the place!"

"I do, but all my money's gone."

"I don't see what difference that makes. Aren't you working and earning your way? Besides, I always thought that you had a scholarship."

"You're right, I have; but you see I didn't finish up last term quite so well in my studies as I should have done, and the amount of my scholarship has been reduced. And then this Mr. Simmons who has been helping me has written that he can't afford to do it any more. So I've just got to get out and begin earning money for myself. It's just as well, I guess. I could never make the grade as a student, anyway."

“If I were you, I’d just quit talking like that. Look here, Bull, I get more money a month than I could possibly spend in a year. It just piles up in the bank, and it might as well be put to some useful purpose. All I need to know is how much you want, and I can get it for you pronto. All I have to do is to write a check. There must be more than a thousand dollars to my credit at just this moment.”

“But I can’t take your money, Oscar. You’re a brick, but it wouldn’t be right. You haven’t the shadow of a chance of having it returned. You see it’s literally true that I haven’t a cent to my name, and there’s nobody back of me to help me out. I’m playing a lone hand, as the detective stories say.”

“I don’t care whether I ever see the cash again. Besides I know you, and I’m sure that nothing can keep you from success. You will earn enough within two years after your graduation to pay up what you owe.” Oscar was doing his best to put forth every argument which would persuade Bull to accept his assistance, knowing that the latter was proud and that it would be no easy matter to overcome his scruples. The two debated the matter for a long time, and finally, as the mid-

night chimes were striking, Bull agreed to accept a loan of five hundred dollars for his expenses during the remainder of the year, with the specific understanding that he was to sign a promissory note for that sum and that Oscar would consider the transaction as a business investment. When the discussion ended in this settlement, both boys were much relieved.

Still somewhat disturbed in his conscience, Bull called the next morning at the office of the Head to explain to him, man-fashion, just what had occurred.

"Do you think, sir, that I am justified in accepting Harris's proposal?" he inquired, after he had told all the details.

"Why not, Taylor?" was the Head's prompt reply. "He has plenty of money of his own,—I happen to know that. He likes you and believes in your future. Furthermore, he is bound to be much injured in his feelings if you refuse. I hope that you will, by all means, borrow the money and remain at Andover until the year is over."

"And you don't think, then, that it will seem like sponging on a friend?"

"Not at all, my boy," said the Head reassuringly. "Harris is an unusual lad, who has a

mighty good thinking-piece on those shoulders of his. He's a bit too individual, I suppose, from the undergraduate point of view, but I have an idea that he's going to be very popular before many months go by."

"You just bet he is," answered Bull, with a vehemence which made the Head break into a smile. "The only reason why he isn't liked better now is because a lot of the fellows can't understand his fine qualities. The truth is that he has grown beyond the 'kid' stage, and a lot of these birds,—I mean these boys,—haven't." Bull was having difficulty in avoiding the slang which he habitually employed with his friends.

"Well, at any rate, don't you hesitate to take the money, Taylor," advised the Head, as he rose to indicate that the interview was over. "And, if you can make a little improvement in that Geometry, I'll arrange about some additional aid on a scholarship."

Neither Bull nor the Head felt absolutely bound to keep Oscar's generosity a secret; consequently it was not long before his fine conduct was generally talked about, and he found himself being treated in a most kindly way by some teachers who hitherto had not seemed exactly to under-

stand him. The incident, moreover, firmly cemented his friendship with Bull. The latter would not, from that moment, tolerate the slightest suggestion of critical comment of Oscar, and nearly broke off amicable relations with some of his closest companions because of some mildly disparaging remarks which they made at Oscar's expense. Oscar himself could feel, as the winter wore on, that he was more and more being accepted as a "regular fellow."

It was just being discovered, moreover, that Oscar had an uncanny gift for analyzing the psychology of teachers and predicting the sort of questions which each instructor was likely to ask. Once, just before an examination which "Dolly" Loring gave on Milton's *Minor Poems*, Oscar had the distinction of picking out in advance five of the six passages which that "prof" set on his paper for interpretation. Achievements like this made Oscar very popular just before the "rating" period, when tests were common things. Furthermore, Oscar gained a considerable reputation as an explainer of difficult problems in Mathematics, and his classmates learned that he was always ready to help them with their written work. He was recognized as a quick and clever

student, but escaped the odium which attaches to the "plugger" and the "grind."

It was just after his birthday, in the middle of January, that Oscar wrote to his mother a kind of outline of his progress. A few passages are, perhaps, not without interest:

"DEAREST MOTHER:

"Now that I'm nineteen years old I suppose I ought to feel a good deal wiser, and I rather think that I have learned a bit in the last few months. You keep asking me how I am getting along, and I wish there were more to tell. My school work is not so bad, and I must say that it seems very easy to do. My morals are not being contaminated, I guess, and I haven't been caught in any deviltry as yet. When I first came, I was a good deal of a fool, and the fellows made me a kind of goat. ["Goat! Goat!" said Mrs. Harris to herself as she read this. "What does Alfred mean?"] But now they're more decent to me, probably because they find that I'm on to their game. ["On to their game!" repeated the puzzled mother. "My poor boy is losing his refined ways and language!"]

"You want to have me say what I have learned. First of all, I've discovered that not all the influential fellows come from what we used to call the 'best society.' Second, I've found out that money doesn't make any difference about a man's popularity,—at least here in Andover. Third, I've been taught by some experience that there's something good in almost everybody if you can

only get to know him. You can't really hate a fellow you know. Perhaps these things don't seem to you very important, but they're worth a good deal to me just now,—much more than any Geometry or French.

"You will be interested to hear that I've just lent five hundred dollars to Bull Taylor. He used to be a New York newsboy, and he's my best friend in school. ["Horrors!" cried Mrs. Harris, as her eyes fell on this sentence and caught its meaning. "Poor Alfred! I've probably ruined his career!"]

"I hope that you'll plan to get back to America for the Andover-Exeter Track Meet on Memorial Day. I may run in it.

"Your affectionate son,
"ALFRED."

It will be surmised from some statements in this communication that Alfred Tennyson Harris had been busy framing for himself a working theory of life. The materials for this new philosophy had been provided from many sources,—from fire-side talks with "Charlie" Foster, chapel lectures by the Head, little adventures with fellow-students, and conversations with an odd acquaintance, David McGregor, the janitor for Wendell Hall. David, who admitted that he was descended from an ancient Scottish line, was a long and lean figure, with a corrugated face, a confidential manner, and a sly twinkle in his light-blue

eyes,—all joined with a strong acquisitive sense. He had been employed by the school for many years and could tell stories about old boys for generations back. Once Oscar said to him, “ Look here, Dave, you’ve seen a lot of things happen here in Andover. Why don’t you publish your reminiscences? ”

David, scratching his head over this rather long word, finally got Oscar’s meaning and replied, “ Mister Harris, whin I was a bye in auld Dundee, I done lots of foolish things, but I never-r-r wrote no buik.”

David was a loyal member of his local clan, and attended the meetings with regularity. There was one great evening during Oscar’s year at Andover when Harry Lauder, the famous comedian, made a visit to his countrymen in the town. Of course a banquet was given in his honor, to which all the Scotchmen in the vicinity were invited. Professor Foster, himself a Highlander in his ancestry, told Oscar of an incident towards the close of the festivities, when the excited David rose from his seat and caused a sensation by proposing a health, “ To Sir Harry Lauder,—and—and—Sir Lady Lauder! ”

Once on a very cold Sunday morning there was

a knock at Oscar's door, and David walked in, threw off his rough tweed overcoat, and displayed himself in full regalia, kilt, plaid, bonnet, and bare legs. For the edification of Oscar, Bull, and several other boys who congregated there, he did a Highland fling to the accompaniment of a whistled tune. When Bull Taylor remarked upon David's exposure to the elements, the latter answered, "Boy, the McGregors belong to a har-r-dy race!"

When David was in the right mood, he liked to toast his toes in front of the open fire and talk in his broad dialect about "Bonnie Doon" and "Auld Reekie,"—often for so long that Oscar would have to use summary methods to get rid of him. One day the old man picked from the bookshelf a gorgeously bound copy of Burns's poetry, and, turning the pages, began in a low voice to murmur the lines, shaking his head all the time with delight. Gradually warming up, he recited whole passages with a fervor which only a genuine Scotchman can show. Oscar was profoundly stirred by some of the poems,—not the love songs, although they were fascinating, but the sturdy lyrics of independence, particularly:

“What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin grey, and a’ that?
Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine—
A man’s a man for a’ that.”

The one which appealed to him most, however, was a stanza which he came across by chance and asked David to recite:

“If happiness hae not her seat
An’ center in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest!
Nae treasures nor pleasures
Could make us happy lang;
The heart ay’s the part ay
That makes us right or wrong!”

This, thought Oscar, is a whole sermon in itself. So impressed was he with it that he induced David to teach him how to pronounce the gnarled consonants and to roll his “r’s” like the great Harry Lauder himself. Then, with fire in his eye, he would rush into Bull’s room and declaim:

“The heart ay’s the part ay
That makes us right or wrong!”

Among the elements of a liberal education which Andover had to offer Oscar Harris, this was not the least; and David McGregor proved to be a noble exponent,—quite unconsciously,—of equality and democracy.

CHAPTER VII

THE HERO WINS HIS SPURS

ALL his life Oscar had lived in warm climates. As a child in Texas and as a youth in Southern France and Italy, he had seldom seen snow, and he had never known what it is to be cold, really chilled through to the bone. Hence he had looked forward with dread to the coming of the New England winter, which his mother had described to him as a season of sore throats, influenza, and pneumonia. When he peered out of his window on the morning after his return from the Christmas holidays, he could see nothing but a wide level plain of white, stretching all the way down to the woods. Here and there beaten tracks indicated that people had been out on snowshoes or skiis. The paths which he had been accustomed to follow on the runs were now completely obliterated, covered by nearly a foot of hard-packed snow. When he set out for the "Beanery," he noticed that the broad Main Street, an important highway between Boston and Portland, had been cleared by scrapers so that automobiles

could run without much difficulty; but the snow was piled in gigantic drifts on each side. The boys were wearing enormous flapping overshoes and heavy ulsters, although most of them inconsistently refused to put on hats. Oscar, in his fur coat, was by no means set apart, for there were many garbed precisely as he was. There could be no doubt that winter had descended on Andover Hill.

Oscar's first expedition, after he had reported at the Registrar's office, interviewed his Class Officer for the making out of his schedule, and unpacked his trunks, was to the Gymnasium, where he made inquiries about the track program for the term. He was informed that he ought, first of all, to pass off his "efficiency tests" if he desired to be absolutely free for running. Going then to Dr. Rogers's headquarters, he obtained permission to take the necessary trials at once. These were of various kinds, designed to give proof of strength, endurance, agility, and courage. In the high jump, Oscar, although he had never practised the event, managed to clear three feet, nine inches, thus securing fifteen out of a possible twenty points. It was easy for him to cover the half-mile in less than two minutes, fifty seconds, and

thus obtain the maximum of twenty points. As soon as this was over, Dr. Rogers examined his heart and lungs, and Oscar was pleased to notice the physician's smile as he listened through the stethoscope. "You are certainly still improving, Harris," he commented. "Far faster than I ever thought you could do it. And you must have put on at least fifteen pounds since last fall."

"Exactly thirteen," said Oscar, with pardonable pride.

With the thigh flexion, better known as the "belly grind," Oscar had a little difficulty, but he managed to perform that extraordinary operation some nine times, thus obtaining fifteen more points. Those unfamiliar with such things may be interested to know that this exercise consists in hanging from a bar with one's hands and lifting the legs until the toes touch the bar overhead,—a real ordeal for obese middle age but simple for the young and supple. He had next to climb a pole hand-over-hand, a difficult task for him because his arms were not well developed as yet, and he was still tall and ungainly. Twelve feet was as high as he could go,—an addition of ten points to his score. Last of all he had to dive into the tank and swim a hundred yards,—a very simple propo-

sition for a lad who had been brought up in salt water and to whom a swim of a mile was nothing. He was readily allowed the full twenty points for this test. "Doc" Rogers told him that this swimming was a trial which even experienced athletes sometimes fail to pass. "Why," he said, "look at Chuck Ellis, the quarter-back on the 'varsity. He has never been able to take a dive, and of course he hasn't yet received full credit for physical efficiency. He is coming around this afternoon for one more try, but I doubt whether he can make it. He has always been afraid of water, and nothing can seem to eliminate that fear. Yet you know that on the football field he wouldn't be terrified of 'Red' Grange and 'Eddie' Mahan combined!"

When Oscar emerged dripping but triumphant from the tank, Dr. Rogers certified him as "physically efficient," with a rating of eighty out of a total of one hundred. "You'll do better than that in a few weeks," commented Dr. Rogers. "But you've made a fine showing considering what you were last September. And now you're free to enroll in any form of competitive sport which you like. I suppose you're going to run, aren't you?"

“Yes, sir! That’s what I’m going to try to do. And may I go over to the Case Memorial and start this afternoon?”

“So far as I am concerned, it’s all right. Only don’t be in too great a rush. You had better consult Mr. Shepley, the Track Coach, right away and find out what he wants you to do.”

Oscar, quite satisfied with his progress thus far, dressed himself and went out to find Mr. Shepley, who was in the Case Memorial,—a great indoor athletic field, with a dirt floor for baseball and field events and a gallery with a hanging track for the longer runs. The roof was entirely of steel and glass, so that it was well lighted; and, even in the dead of winter, when the snowdrifts were two or three feet deep upon the playing-fields, it was possible for the boys to practise batting and carry on their regular training in such sports as jumping, weight-throwing, and pole-vaulting. The building was a gift to the academy from a distinguished alumnus in memory of his son,—a young fellow who had played on the nine but had died during the following summer from the effects of an operation. Oscar, who had seen something of this structure during the late fall, was more than ever amazed at its huge size and

at the number of different sports which could be carried on there at one time.

Seeing Mr. Shepley in a corner watching some shot-putters, Oscar went up to him and said, "Mr. Shepley, I'm not much good, but I should like to go out for track this winter. I'm ready to start right away if you'll let me."

Mr. Shepley,—who was known to everybody at Andover as "Shep,"—was a broad-shouldered, heavily built man of thirty-five, who was still exceedingly light on his feet and quick in his motions. He had played a good game of football in his college days, and some of his records in the weight events were still standing. Among the boys he was very popular, for he was always even-tempered, believed in a policy of encouragement, and never failed to give each candidate a square deal. He was the regular coach for all track athletics, but under him was "Larry" Spear, a younger man, not long out of the university, who had won a place at the Olympic Games in the 1500-metre race and had a national reputation as a distance runner. Shep preferred to have the track events in the hands of "Larry" Spear, attending himself to the field work.

"Hello, what's your name?" inquired Shep,

who had never noticed Oscar before. The boy's spectacles and thin legs did not give him the outward semblance of a champion.

"Harris, sir."

"Harris? Harris? Aren't you the fellow that did some work with the cross-country squad? I think I've heard about you."

"Yes, I did go out once or twice with them, but, of course, I'm mighty green."

"So was everybody once," said Shep laconically. "Got anything to do just now?"

"No, I don't have any classes until to-morrow."

"Just throw off your clothes and jog around the track a lap or two. I want to get an idea as to how you run."

Oscar obediently took off his overcoat and other outer garments, appearing at last clad like a *Vogue* advertisement in his "B. V. D.'s." Shep then called to Larry Spear, who was working in another corner of the cage. He was a beautifully built specimen of physical vigor, about five feet, ten inches in height, and perfectly proportioned. Oscar had often admired him as he led some of the runners around the cinder track with long easy strides. "Larry," said Shep, "here's another

candidate for your 'milers.' Don't you recognize him? "

"Of course I do," replied Larry. "It's Harris, isn't it? I'm glad you're coming out. I've seen you starting off with Kid Wing and his gang."

"Yes, I've done a little running with him," answered Oscar modestly, as Larry shook his hand. "But I've never had any one tell me how it should be done."

"Suppose we try you out a bit," said Shep. "Now, Oscar, you go up to the track and trot around twice at an easy gait. We want just a line on your style."

Oscar promptly started out, going rather slowly at first, and then tearing at top speed down the last straightaway in obedience to a shouted injunction from Shep.

"That'll do," said the coach, as Oscar, breathing rather heavily, came up from the finish. "Where did you begin to run? "

"I never was on a track until last fall. Then I got so sore at myself because I was put in with the physical wrecks that I made up my mind to develop myself. One day I just happened to follow after the cross-country squad, and it was so easy to keep up that I asked permission to go with

them. I've been practising every day since, except during the Christmas vacation."

"You're not really so bad," said Shep. "What do you think of him, Larry?"

"Well," said Larry, turning to Oscar after a moment's thought, "of course you have your faults, like all beginners, but I noticed when I watched you running with Kid Wing last fall that you evidently had stamina, which is essential in running the mile. From what Dr. Rogers tells me, you have been developing very rapidly since then, and because of this you are lacking in speed. Although you may not realize it, speed is just as important to a good miler as stamina is. Also your carriage is awkward, and, in improving that, you will add to your speed and endurance. Let me explain a minute. If you could have seen yourself when you were running, you would have noted that you were kicking your heels up behind you. Now this is lost energy. What you want to do is to bring them right forward when you pick them up. Furthermore, lift your knees a trifle higher when you stride forward and light on the balls of your feet instead of in a flat-footed manner. Then your back and shoulders were held in too stiff a position, and you were leaning

backwards. Instead of this, you should lean slightly forward so that the weight of your body will be over the ball of your foot when you light on it. Keep your elbows a little closer to your body, and take a long, easy stride without tense muscles; that's the kind that covers ground. There's a long lecture for you. Do you think that you can remember it all?"

"I'll certainly do my best," answered Oscar, trying his best to conceal the discouragement which he felt.

"Don't be pessimistic," continued Larry. "You really are a natural runner, and I think that we can get rid of your more obvious weaknesses in no time at all. All you need is patience and industry; and so far as I can see, you have plenty of both. You may not get to be a world-beater in a week, but some day you'll be winning races at college if you keep at it, and take care of yourself."

"I'll do anything to learn how to run," burst out Oscar, with an enthusiasm which made the older men smile.

"All right, that's settled," said Shep. "You turn up here at two-thirty this afternoon, and Larry will take charge of you for a while. In two

weeks I'll have a look at you to see how you are getting along."

That was the beginning of a significant change in Oscar's routine. He was now for the first time to be really busy, with every minute occupied. Each afternoon, as soon as lunch was over, he went to the Gymnasium, changed his clothes, and reported to Larry Spear in the Case Memorial. For two or three days he did nothing but run up and down on the dirt floor, trying to carry out Larry's instructions about the way to manage his feet and arms. He took special breathing exercises for the enlargement of his lung capacity. When his labors were over, usually about three-thirty, he would strip, take a cold shower, and have a refreshing plunge in the pool. He found himself at first very tired and drowsy at night, and he was glad to crawl between the sheets at ten o'clock. But he awoke each morning eager for more training, and Larry had to caution him repeatedly not to overdo his practice. "You must keep yourself fresh and alert," he kept saying. "If you carry actual running too far, you'll get stale, and that's fatal!" It was a strange fact that he was meanwhile steadily improving in his studies. He realized, after two weeks of this sort

of thing had gone by, that his regular habits and robust health were enabling him to work more rapidly and that his mind seemed to be clearer than it ever had been before.

It used to interest Oscar immensely to see the complicated machine that was in motion at the Gymnasium and the Case Memorial, where some of the faculty never went. He would pause on the "Gym" floor to watch dozens of boys performing grotesque antics in order to qualify for some physical tests; in the pool he would come across Mr. Dale, the Swimming Coach, showing a group of what the *Phillipian* called "natators" how to dive and plunge; on the hockey rink, as he ran across from the "Gym" to the Case Memorial, he could see sweated figures darting here and there, chasing a puck over the ice; in the gallery of the cage would be small squads of fencers awkwardly handling the foils; and on the floor of the enclosure around him there were always hurdlers and shot-putters and sprinters, each one intent on some particular task. Even these were not all, for, in secluded rooms in the Gymnasium there were boxers and wrestlers preparing for matches, and at some hours on the "Gym" floor the basketball team would be assembled for

practice. Everywhere, it seemed to Oscar, students were being taught how to acquire strength for the burdens of life. Body was not being made more important than mind; it was taken as contributing to it. Habits of cleanliness and regular exercise were being fostered which would last most of these boys throughout their careers.

Little by little Oscar could feel that he was improving. His intelligence made him quick to catch and apply a suggestion, and he was an apt pupil. Occasionally Larry Spear would praise him when he did especially well. Soon he was practising how to start with the gun. Once a week he was allowed to go into a real race with some of his competitors, and he learned the joy of winning over a friendly rival. It somehow gave him renewed confidence when he discovered that there were others who were not so good as he was. "By George, Bull," he said one evening, "do you know that I beat four fellows in a mile 'try-out' this afternoon?"

"Good for you, Oscar," replied Bull. "That's what you need most of all,—self-assurance! I'll tell you right now that when you once get in your head the idea that you can win, that's half the battle."

“ Well, I’m not going to get ‘ cocky,’ ” answered Oscar, “ because there are three or four still who are better than I am. But I’m going to beat them yet.”

One of the important events of the Winter Term is always the big carnival of the Boston Athletic Association, commonly called the “ B. A. A. Games,” in which there is included a relay race between Andover and Exeter. It invariably arouses great enthusiasm among the followers of track sports. The Andover team was composed of a quartette of experienced men, headed by Phil Allen, a brilliant quarter-miler. Two weeks before the meet, everything looked bright for Andover. And then, in quick succession, two of the four were incapacitated: Henry Downing, the second-best sprinter, fell ill with the mumps and had to go home; and “ Charlie ” Nolan, always a reliable performer, was operated on in the Infirmary for appendicitis. On the next afternoon Larry Spear called the runners together for a final look at them. Only Phil Allen and “ Fritz ” Allis were left on the relay team.

“ Fellows,” announced Larry, as the twelve or fifteen men gathered round him, “ we’re up against it. There are only a few days left for

training, and we've got to rely on some absolutely green men. I'm going to pick 'Barney' Wright and"—he hesitated for a fraction of a second,—“and Harris.” Oscar felt a trembling at the knees. “It can't be,” he thought. “I must have heard wrong.” And then he heard his friend, Mark Stackpole, at his side say, “Congratulations, old man. You've got a chance now.” To have some one say that to him was a great encouragement in itself.

For the next ten days Oscar was so excited that he could hardly eat. Larry had to get him aside and warn him. “Harris, you're all on edge. Calm down, or you'll go to pieces. To-morrow afternoon there'll be no practice of any kind. I want you to go back to your room, with the most thrilling detective story in the Library, and forget all about track meets and relay races. If you turn up again as nervous as you were to-day, I'll fire you off the team. I mean it!”

This threat, which had a sincere ring about it, made Oscar assume an outward calm, but inwardly he was seething. He dreamed again and again of coming in yards ahead of his Exeter opponent, and stepping up to receive the gold medal which would be his reward. He could

even hear the adulation of his fellows as he came back to his room after the victory. His hours in the classroom seemed interminable.

On the evening before the race, Larry Spear gave the team some sound advice, warning them of the peculiarities of their Exeter rivals and outlining the strategy which would be used. Oscar was to run third, with Phil Allen, the blond sprinter, coming last. It was to be Oscar's business,—so Larry informed him,—not to lose any more distance than he could help doing, and to enable Phil to triumph over his Exeter opponent as the race ended. On Saturday morning it was impossible for Oscar to concentrate his mind on his studies. No matter how hard he controlled himself, he kept thinking of the responsibility which rested upon him. During the early afternoon he followed Larry's instructions and played checkers with Mark Stackpole; but he hardly won a game. He was thankful when the time arrived for going to the train; and the trip in was made endurable by the constant "jollyng" which was going on, especially between Shep and Larry, who never tired of playing practical jokes on each other.

Almost before he knew it, he was in the dress-

ing-room, drawing on his running trunks, and Phil Allen, coming along and slapping him on the back, had cried, "Buck up, old top!" He was followed by Larry, who said, "Here, Oscar, put on a smile! It isn't a funeral, you know! In an hour it'll all be over." Oscar wondered how anybody could speak so casually about a race which to him seemed so momentous. It did not occur to him that Phil and Larry had been in dozens of similar contests, and that their coolness was the product of long experience.

As Oscar stepped into the open, before a crowd of at least ten thousand spectators, he felt as if the whole world were staring at him. His knees were knocking together, and he could almost hear his heart beating like a trip-hammer. A weak sensation swept over him; there was a colossal hollow at the pit of his stomach, and he seemed to be completely helpless. His attention was concentrated for a few seconds on the problem of keeping his ankles from bending under him. Then he heard Larry Spear say, "Go out and warm up with the others on the track for a minute or two. You'll have more confidence when your legs begin to move."

Larry's calm manner did a little to reassure

Oscar, and he automatically followed Phil Allen in his motions as the latter took little short sprints up and down and then raised his knees as far up in front of him as he could reach. Once as Oscar stopped he could hear the Andover rooters giving a "long Andover, with Allen on the end!" He pricked up his ears and listened,—yes, there it was, the familiar sound! Then the cheer-leader shouted, "Two and one for Harris, twice!" They were cheering him! It was the first time in his life that such a thing had happened! The noise was like stirring music to his soul. Oscar glanced at Phil Allen, who was completely unconcerned; once he stooped over to tie his shoe-lace tighter and occasionally he rose on his toes to make sure that his muscles were functioning properly. Watching him, Oscar found himself a little less nervous and breathing rather more freely.

At last the men were called to the starting mark. The Andover-Exeter race is the only interscholastic event in the evening at the "B. A. A." games, and it usually arouses more intense enthusiasm among the spectators than any of the college contests. A silence fell over the throng as the two first runners lined up, Fritz Allis, Andover's representative, side by side with

the Exeter sprinter. The starter gave his final instructions. Then there was the report of the pistol, and they were off! The track has three laps to the quarter-mile, and, as the regulation relay distance is a mile, each man has to go three times around. Neck and neck the two dashed on, hardly a foot apart as they completed the circuit twice. Meanwhile Barney Wright, Andover's second man, prepared to receive the baton from Fritz's hand. The two rivals sprinted around the curve, the Exeter man apparently gaining slightly; but on the final straightaway, Fritz pulled up abreast of him and came to the starting point perhaps a flash of an eye ahead of his opponent.

Like an arrow from a bow, Barney Wright was off down the boards, and Oscar, his teeth chattering, got into position ready to take his turn. Shep spoke a few words of encouragement into his ear, and Phil Allen, standing by his side, said, "You'll do it all right, Oscar! Just keep your nerve." Meanwhile the two runners were bounding on, Barney,—who was, like Oscar, an untried man,—falling ever so little behind. As they swept into sight at the end, Oscar could see that the Exeter runner was in the lead by a yard or two, and real-

ized that he would have to give his opponent, "Sid" Bixby, a handicap of several feet. He stood expectantly on the mark, still trembling,—not with fear but with excitement. The Exeter man dashed in first, and then, like a whirlwind came Barney. Oscar seized the baton, and, with "Go it!" ringing in his ears, started off. From the speed with which Bixby started, it was apparent that he hoped to run Oscar right off his feet. But Oscar had been carefully coached and knew exactly what he was doing. Larry had said to him just before the race, "Remember, Harris, you are not a sprinter. You must be careful not to run yourself out during the first lap and then die at the close of the second. No matter how hard this Bixby tries to run away from you, keep your head. This kind of a race takes brains as well as sinews, and I want you to show that you have both."

Oscar's first sensation was one of relief that his legs were actually moving. He found, to his surprise, that he was going along quite easily, without any inconvenience, behind Sid Bixby. He even noticed that his opponent seemed to be straining to get a commanding lead, but, following his instructions, he made no attempt to catch

him. As they finished the second lap, Oscar was perhaps ten feet behind, and the Exeter stands were a raving, shouting mass of humanity. But, once in action, Oscar found himself amazingly cool. He knew precisely when he would start his sprint, and, as the two entered the back stretch, he let loose his reserve energy. Inch by inch and then foot by foot he could see himself drawing nearer to his rival, who was obviously running with difficulty. Consciousness of this fact gave Oscar added power. He was not aware of the yelling thousands; he could not have told whether they were silent or cheering; but he was certain that he could beat the Exeter man if only he had distance enough. As they rounded the last curve and started down the straightaway, he was still a foot behind, but gaining. On they went side by side. Oscar was desperately swinging his arms to give himself impetus. His muscles were now **very** tight, and his teeth were clenched. He saw Phil Allen ahead of him, waving encouragement with his outstretched arm, waiting to receive the baton from his hand. With a final lunge forward, he thrust it out, felt Phil seize it, and staggered to the side of the track, only to be held up by the arms of the onlookers. First among them was

Mark Stackpole, who said, "Bully for you, old top! We've got 'em! Phil can trim that fellow Hawkins without half trying! You've given him a corking start!"

It had all been over so quickly that Oscar could hardly believe that his part was done. But he straightened up, pulled around himself the blanket which some kindly disposed person had thrown over his shoulders, and waited to see the finish. Sure enough, Phil Allen, with the advantage of a full yard which Oscar had given him, was running away from the Exeter man, who was not in good condition. In the end Phil crossed the finish line at least five yards ahead. It was a conclusive Andover victory, in not far from record time. "Why," thought Oscar, as he walked to his dressing-room, "Phil would have won for us, no matter what I did!" And then, along with this idea, came the consoling recollection, "Anyhow, I beat my man!"

In the dressing-room Oscar had his first taste of glory,—the glory which, in every age, has been assigned to physical prowess. Man after man whose face he did not recognize came up to shake his hand, saying, "Fine race, Oscar!" or "Well run, Harris!" Some one handed him a medal,

but he had no time to look at it. Most satisfactory of all to Oscar was the moment when Larry appeared and said, "Well, Harris, you're going to make a 'miler,' I think. If you can keep from getting conceited over this victory, you'll turn out all right." And so, after the long ride home in the train and the cold journey up the hill to Wendell Hall, Oscar, somewhat bewildered, a little tired, but very, very happy, fell into a dreamless sleep. He had made good!

CHAPTER VIII

THE HERO WIDENS HIS HORIZON

OSCAR's new friendships with such fellows as Kid Wing and Bull Taylor had brought him gradually into contact with a society about which, during the fall term, he had known nothing. Furthermore, his appearance on the track squad, together with the fact that he was picked for the relay team, made him a familiar figure to the student body. Soon he noticed that he was being spoken to cordially on the street by men who had hitherto contented themselves with the indifferent greeting of conventionality. On one or two occasions he actually found himself walking across the campus with Steve Fisher, who, as President of the senior class, was undoubtedly the most important man in school. He became well acquainted, moreover, with Hal Manning, in whom he detected a kindred spirit; and he even discovered by experience that the gayly dressed Ted Sherman was a genial and unselfish soul at heart. In short, Oscar could see signs that he was

being accepted by the members of a kind of inner circle, composed of those who really shaped undergraduate opinion. Such a group there must inevitably be in a school like Andover,—a group made up of the men who do things, who have the capacity for leadership, and in whom their mates have confidence. They are not always athletes, although they are likely to be; but they do possess personality and the heaven-sent faculty of getting along with others. As he became more intimate with fellows of this type, Oscar's outlook on life broadened. He saw that, in spite of some mistakes, boys judge one another with real shrewdness and discernment, and can usually pick the wheat from the chaff.

If such a society as a true democracy ever has existed, it must be in a great American school, in which boy meets boy in the beginning on absolutely even terms, each individual student starting with the same chance, regardless of his previous surroundings or antecedents. Naturally interested in human nature, with all its frailties and obsessions, Oscar saw around him boys of every conceivable type, representing a hundred different outlooks on life and the world in general. On the same floor with him, for instance, lived

"Dutch" Von Bernuth, a young Hollander, the son of a prosperous Amsterdam merchant, who had sent his heir to the United States to learn American business methods and get in touch with transatlantic affairs. Dutch used to call on Oscar with some frequency, largely at first because of the latter's familiarity with Europe, and especially with Holland, which brought about a congeniality between the two. Later, however, there developed a real friendship, based on a certain similarity in dispositions. Dutch was a frail-looking lad, with the manners of a courtier and a slight foreign accent which lent charm to his speech.

"Didn't you have a hard time getting accustomed to this place?" asked Oscar of him one day as they sat together on the window-seat watching the snow float down in enormous flakes to the frozen ground.

"Of course I did. It was like getting adjusted to a new world,—like moving from the earth to the moon. And there didn't seem to be anybody to tell me how to keep from making a fool of myself."

"I felt exactly the same way," said Oscar warmly. "Nobody acts as if he cared a hoot about what happens to a new fellow."

"Later on, I found out that there were plenty of people watching me all the time. But they wanted me to get used to things all by myself. It's the most sensible plan in the end,—coddling never really helped anybody. Did I ever tell you how I was fooled about 'Jimmie' Lapham, the Chemistry 'Prof,' when I first came?"

"No, what's the yarn?"

"Well, when I arrived here, they put me in Jimmie's 'dorm,' I suppose because I was a foreigner and they were sorry for me. I didn't know much about this country, and I couldn't even speak good English. One day, when I saw the air-brake apparatus on the outside door, I asked one of the older fellows what it was. He stopped and explained to me very carefully that it was a device which Jimmie Lapham had patented himself for recording the names and hours of arrival of any of the boys in his 'dorm' who stayed out after eight o'clock. As the door opened and shut, the whole thing was automatically registered. I swallowed the whole story, for he told it without a smile on his face. Do you know that, until the close of the fall term, if I ever happened to come back late from any place, even if I knew that Jimmie wasn't in his room, I always climbed

in at some ground-floor window? One night Hal Manning saw me working hard to pry a window up and wanted to know why I was getting in that way when Jimmie was in Boston at the theatre. I told him that I didn't want to get a 'cut' for coming in late, and went on to explain why. Didn't I get the 'ha! ha!' from the crowd? Oh, no! Not at all!"

"Did you ever let Jimmie hear about it? He's the kind that would appreciate the fun."

"Maybe I will some day, but I don't like to call the unnecessary attention of any of the 'profs' to how green I was."

"You're not the only greenhorn," said Oscar, in his turn. "When I had been here about three days, I asked Mr. Randall whether I could smoke on my way to class. Of course I used to be a regular cigarette fiend in Paris, and Mother didn't seem to care much. It all seemed natural enough to me to ask the question. But 'Weary' looked at me and thought, I imagine, that I was 'kidding' him, for he said, 'Really, Harris, the best place for a "prep" to smoke is on the steps of the Main Building.' I never questioned what he said, and the next morning, after my eight o'clock over in Pearson, I strolled across to the Main Building,

picked out a Fatima, and sat down with my back against one of the pillars for a quiet after-breakfast smoke. I had been there just about two minutes, I guess, when along came the Head, walking very fast as he always does. His mind was on something else and he didn't see me until he got very close; then his eagle eye fell on me and he stopped short. Of course I stood up, and then he said, 'Are you a student in this academy?' 'Yes,' said I, without a quiver, and not even throwing the cigarette away. 'What are you smoking here for?' And then I, like the blithering idiot I was, blurted out, 'Mr. Randall told me it would be all right.' 'Mr. Randall told you that!' he repeated. 'Yes, sir,' I went on. 'I inquired whether I could smoke on my way to class, and he told me that most fellows preferred the porch of the Main Building.'

"The Head certainly gave me a searching look, but I guess he saw that I was a little simple-minded, for pretty soon he broke into a loud laugh. He couldn't break off for two or three minutes, but finally he calmed down and gave me a lecture,—a kind one, all right, but without any sugary stuff,—explaining how things were done in Andover. I can remember almost every word

he spoke. "He didn't even ask me my name, but when he got ready to close, he said, 'If I were you, my boy, I should get rid of those cigarettes until I had acquired a decent physical development. Here you are built a good deal like a shoe-string and not any stronger than a fair-sized rabbit. If I were your father, I should be ashamed to own my son. But, if you feel that you must smoke that thing, take it down in the Grill where the school loafers sit around in the morning, and don't let yourself be caught with a cigarette in your mouth on the street or in the dormitories. Some of the teachers may not be so considerate of you as I have been.' He was mighty square about it all, and I hardly smoked at all after that. Of course since I've been out for track I couldn't do it, anyhow."

"That is certainly a funny story. It's queer what simpletons we can be," said Dutch, smiling to himself. "I had played soccer in Holland when I was just a kid, and I thought I was pretty good. Of course I joined the soccer squad and might have made the team if I could have kept off 'non-ex.' But even when all hope of that was gone, I used to keep on practising. One afternoon a good-looking chap came up to me and said, 'What are

you kicking in that ridiculous way for?' I was a little bit hot for the moment, and, before I thought, I answered, 'None of your business, you big stiff!' As soon as I had spoken, I remembered that the fellow was Roscoe Dale, one of the new teachers just out of college. He was so thunderstruck that he couldn't even speak; and finally he just flushed up and walked away. After the practice was over, I went around to his room and apologized. Do you know, he told me that he felt so much complimented at being taken for a schoolboy that he wasn't really mad at all."

Dutch's gifts as a story-teller did not keep him from having trouble with his school work. He was very well endowed mentally, and a psychological test would have shown him to be above the average of his classmates; but he was repeatedly becoming absorbed in some outside activity and neglecting his less-alluring daily tasks. For one term he was fascinated with organ-playing and commenced taking lessons under Dr. Schleiermacher, but he practised so assiduously that he flunked all his courses at Christmas and was promptly placed on probation,—known by the students as "Pro." Shortly after came the terrifying interview with the Head which is the in-

evitable accompaniment of a vote of probation by the faculty.

"Well, young man," said the Head, as he saw Von Bernuth enter his office, "what will your father say when he receives this last unsatisfactory report of yours?"

"I don't know, sir. He may order me to return home right away, but I hope not."

"He may behave like the Chinese Government. Last year one of our Chinese boys, Cheng, had a very poor record in his studies, and I had to write an official notification to the authorities who sent him here on a national fund. About a month later I received a reply to this effect,—'Send home the criminal Cheng immediately at our expense and we will have him beheaded.' They would have done it, too, and I'm not sure that the same kind of rough justice isn't what you deserve."

Dutch assumed one of his characteristic plaintive smiles and replied, "I'd rather keep my head for the present, if you don't mind, sir. The trouble is that there are so many diversions to lead one away from his work. I keep wanting to try some new game, like chess, and the first thing I know, I get an 'F' in History. But I'll agree

to reform if you'll only let me have one more trial."

"Very well, Von Bernuth," responded the Head, who, in his broad humanity, could not help sympathizing deeply with the lad. "But just remember this,—we can't continue forever making allowances for you just because you come from a foreign land. You are bright enough when you settle down to business. Your motto ought to be, 'When I became a man, I put away childish things.' Now you'd better enter at once on a new period of your life,—turn over a new leaf, as we say here in America. I don't want to have you called before me again."

"I don't want to come again, either," replied Dutch, "at least on this kind of an errand."

For the benefit of those who do not know Dutch, it ought to be said that he did finally graduate with his class from Andover, but only because two or three of his instructors were afflicted with an attack of generosity just as the year closed.

Young Von Bernuth was only one of many interesting men whom Oscar was learning to know. It is probable that Oscar, when he entered Andover, was not altogether free from the taint of

superciliousness. He had always associated with well-groomed people, who observed the same rules of etiquette and used the same precise idiom. Now he was thrown with fellows representing every rank of society and every sort of breeding. In his English class he had on his right the heir to one of the largest fortunes in the United States, —a shy, inconspicuous boy, with an insignificant personality, who never spoke unless he had to do so and exerted no influence whatever in the school. On Oscar's left was a black-eyed, red-cheeked, talkative little lad named Sassoferato, the son of a Sicilian emigrant, who had a cheerful smile for everybody. He once told Oscar that, in the evenings and on holidays, he worked in his uncle's fruit-store in Lawrence; and his ambition was to become a lawyer and serve in the legislature. Between the millionaire's son and the emigrant's child, Oscar would have selected the latter as his companion on any basis of choice.

On several occasions Oscar took a dislike to some fellow on account of his voice or his neck-tie or some peculiar personal habit. Later, when he grew better acquainted with him, Oscar became aware that the offensive attribute was merely superficial, having no relation whatever to

the soul underneath. One or two incidents taught Oscar that he must be very careful not to judge others too hastily or on insufficient evidence. There was human material of every conceivable kind in Andover. It was like life itself, with identically the same cross-sections that may be found in any small city,—thrifty and improvident, aggressive and indolent, liberal and mean, intelligent and stupid. There were little cliques of various kinds,—of “sports,” of athletes, of musicians, of “fussers,” of writers. It was advisable, Oscar discovered, to go slow before allying himself with any one group; and, as a matter of fact, he never allowed himself to become too closely identified with one more than another.

Indeed, when he came to think things over, he found that his friends were of many different kinds. There was an American Indian, named Jernigan, with the high cheek-bones and copper color of his race, who was a skilful baseball player and undeniably the best actor in the academy. In native dignity and physical attractiveness he was superior to most of the white students. Oscar saw him frequently, and enjoyed nothing more than talking with him regarding the treatment of his people by the United States Government.

Then there was a dapper little Central American, Ramon Cortez, of Spanish ancestry and haughty bearing, who had a reputation for untold wealth and justified it by the luxury of his apartments and the money which he spent on clothes. His harmless escapades with young ladies were diverting to his friends,—especially as he was a little bit inclined to boast about his conquests. There was one boy, Leslie Ascham, who had spent his childhood in Egypt, almost under the shadow of the Sphinx and the Pyramids, and another who had been born and brought up in Jerusalem, within sight of the Mount of Olives; and near these would be lean and nasal New Englanders, who had never been across the Hudson River. There were Southerners from Alabama and Texas and Kentucky, with soft voices and gentle ways, but fiery in their tempers when aroused. There were stalwart young men from Western ranches, who had always dwelt in the open. There were, of course, Chinese and Japanese, meeting each other a little suspiciously at first, but often playing together on the same soccer team as if their countries had been friendly for a century. There was an Italian, Dannunzio, who admitted that he was over twenty-five and who was a fully-

ordained clergyman in a parish not far from Andover Hill. He preached sermons before his Italian congregation on Sundays and then came back to his classroom work in Andover on Monday morning, indefatigable in his passion for an education more fitted to his profession.

One of the oddest characters was "Tony" Levy, a Polish Jew, who came from the North End of Boston. Day after day he failed in his recitations, but he regularly came up smiling for the next attempt. "Do you know," he once said to Oscar, in his indistinct guttural utterance, "how they let me in Andover? I was so dense in my studies in grammar school and so full of deviltry that each teacher wanted to get rid of me. So every one kept promoting me to get me out of the way, and before long I was in the top class. Then I came here and broke all records by covering four years in one. You see they registered me as a senior last fall because Mr. Lynton said that I ought to be there on the basis of my high-school diploma. I kept dropping back at each rating, until now I'm in the lowest class, with 'kids' of fourteen and fifteen,—and I'm twenty-four. Probably at Easter the faculty will bounce me out,—that's what I deserve, for I can't seem to

learn anything from books. Too many peasant ancestors, I guess! But I'll bet that no other man here ever travelled backwards so far in so short a time."

In the course of his observations Oscar came to the conclusion that any man with an honest purpose, no matter how eccentric he might be, was respected by the undergraduates. The student who did not get along was the "smart Aleck," the one who was "fresh" and thought that he knew it all. The cardinal sin in a "prep," for instance, was "freshness." Uncouthness, vulgarity, effeminacy,—these were drawbacks, but they could be forgiven,—"freshness," never! When he tried to define "freshness," he found it rather difficult. Talking too much, sneering at school customs, wearing "loud" clothes,—these were all signs of "freshness," but there were also others the secret of which Oscar could never penetrate. What he did see, however, was that a reputation for "freshness" was exceeding hard to outgrow. There were many men who never fully recovered prestige after some foolish blunder committed inadvertently during the early weeks of the course.

Through talks with men like Steve Fisher and

Hal Manning, who represented the best element in the undergraduate body, Oscar was led into further ambitions, the achievement of which would demonstrate his versatility. When the call for the Dramatic Club appeared, Oscar, who was familiar with the theatre, determined to present himself as a candidate. The try-out consisted merely of the reading of a part assigned by the coach, "Hook" Edwards, one of the English instructors. When his turn came, Oscar delivered with passionate fervor the tragic last speech of Othello, beginning:

"Soft you; a word or two before you go.

I have done the state some service, and they know't.
No more of that."

As he concluded with the words, "And smote him thus!" Oscar gave himself an imaginary stab and sank limp and lifeless to the floor, to the delight of his auditors, who did not hesitate to applaud vigorously. Oscar was not ordinarily conceited, but he was now convinced that he had the genius of a Walter Hampden, and he was sure that he could make a "hit" on any stage. On the following morning, therefore, he was overjoyed to read in the *Phillipian* that he had been assigned a part; and he was on time to the second that

evening when Mr. Edwards met the successful competitors. In announcing the various rôles, Mr. Edwards spoke briefly on their significance:

“Of course Jernigan will be the hero. He’s the best actor in school, the only one who can do the part decently. As for you, Harris, I’m going to use you as Dr. Dryasdust, the funny college professor. It ought to fit you perfectly.”

“But, Mr. Edwards,” objected Oscar, much injured in his pride, “I’m not a humorous actor. I never took a comic part in my life. My bent is towards tragedy.”

“That doesn’t make any difference, Harris. You’re tall and thin and wear spectacles, and are rather funny-looking. All you’ll have to do is to be natural.”

There was a wave of laughter in the room, and Oscar blushed a brilliant scarlet. “But ——” he began.

“But me no ‘buts,’” said Mr. Edwards, in mock cajolery. “Be a good sport! You’re chosen by unanimous agreement of the judges, and you’ll make the sensation of the evening. You won’t have to do a thing but be yourself. We’ll add a few delicate touches to your costume, and the house will scream itself hoarse.”

Oscar had reason to feel that this was a dubious compliment. He had expected to be assigned a rôle like that of Hamlet or Romeo. Indeed, he had seen John Barrymore as the "melancholy Dane" in New York during the holidays and noticed what he thought to be a similarity between himself and that tragedian. When he told this to his Uncle Henry, the latter said, "The only resemblance I can see is in the legs,—you're both skinny!" Nevertheless Oscar persisted in his delusion, and now he was inclined to resign from the club. But, after the meeting was over, Mr. Edwards, who was kind-hearted as well as sharp-tongued, stopped him and spoke to him in a sympathetic way.

"Look here, Harris," he said. "There's more merit in being a good comedian than in being a perfectly rotten hero. You have something of a talent for burlesque, and not a vestige for tragedy. Why not accept the facts and do your best as *Dr. Dryasdust*?"

"I'll do anything you want to have me do," answered Oscar, in a tone of resignation. "But I hate to make a display of myself as a fool."

"We're all fools at one time or another, Oscar. Some of us, who happen to have selected teaching

as a profession, have spent our lives being ridiculous. After all, you'll make a mighty entertaining fool! That's something to be considered! "

Oscar accepted this tribute with the best possible grace and went off in a happier mood. A little serious reflection induced him to decide to do his best in the part assigned to him. For a month or more, during the stormy February evenings, he studied his lines, until he actually became keenly interested in the character which he was representing. The result was that when the performance was given, in March, in the new auditorium, he was applauded even more than Jernigan and had to show himself four or five times before the curtain. In the next *Phillipian* Oscar was delighted to read a criticism of the play, written by his English teacher, Mr. Loring, in which the latter said:

"Quite the most finished acting of the evening was done by Harris, who made the character of *Dr. Dryasdust* very real to the audience. It is a pleasure to see an undergraduate catching the subtlety of a part like this and presenting it so intelligently. Harris's interpretation was the successful product of intelligence plus wise instruction."

Oscar's unlucky experience with secret societies

during the fall term had made him chary of any references to them, and he had resolved to drive them from his mind forever. It was evident, as he looked about, that students who deliberately tried to get into the good graces of society men seldom succeeded in their aim. He was determined that he would keep steadfastly on his way, regardless of what fraternities might mean in undergraduate life. It happened that his rehearsals on the Dramatic Club threw him into intimate contact with Hal Manning, who had called frequently at his room, once or twice bringing other fellows with him. The conversation on these occasions was very general, and Oscar attached no significance whatever to it. He recalled later, however, that Hal had asked him a few questions regarding his family and his life abroad. Things came to a climax on one March evening, when Hal said to him, "Oscar, I suppose you have been told that your father was K. P. N. here?"

"Yes, I knew it because Mother gave me his pin, and I've always kept it."

"How would you like to join that crowd yourself?"

"Say, Hal, are you planning to initiate me into another fraternal organization? I should think

that once with you would be enough. It is for me! ”

“No, this is serious. I don’t blame you much for shying, but really, Oscar, you’ve changed a good deal since last September, you know. We all want you, and you’ll be in the crowd with Steve Fisher and me. Besides, I should think that you would like to go the way your dad went.”

“I do, Hal. But you’ve got to admit that this invitation is just a little sudden. I can’t get used to the fact that you and Steve want me in K. P. N.”

“Then you’ll give us your pledge?”

“If you’re being straight with me, I certainly will. It’s the only society I should ever join. But if this is another joke, I’ll never forgive you.”

It was no joke. Before the term was over, Oscar had been formally initiated, this time without a river bath, and was wearing the jewelled pin of K. P. N., the same symbol which his father had been proud to display. Oscar was glad to realize that there were those among his comrades who had confidence in him and his future. He accepted the honor as evidence of his progress towards maturity.

One morning during the week while Oscar was "running" for the society, Ted Sherman, who was a member of Q. M. C., met Hal Manning on the street.

"Hi, Hal," he shouted. "Say, who's this Harris you're taking into that punk society of yours?"

"Why, it's Oscar Harris, the relay team man, a good deal better fellow than anybody in your wretched gang of shysters."

"Oscar Harris! I know him, of course. But isn't he the same chap we saw last fall when he was entering, and didn't you and I claim that there was nothing in him?"

"Sure, that's right, we did!" answered Hal, recalling the incident. "And you wanted to bet twenty-five dollars that he wouldn't last over Christmas!"

"I remember. Well, something must have happened to him, or else you K. P. N. men are drawing a blank."

"No, he's a real fellow. He's changed a tremendous lot in six months. Even Steve admits that he's a presentable kind of person now."

"Well," said Ted, as he started on his way, "I'm going to retract all that I ever said about the influence of Andover. If it can make Oscar

Harris into a normal human being, it can do anything. Steve was right. The fellow had good stuff in him, and it was brought out here in the regular Andover way."

CHAPTER IX

THE HERO IS UNDER SUSPICION

It was while he was in the midst of rehearsing for the annual dramatic performance that Oscar was accidentally involved in an affair which gave him some publicity with the authorities and seemed likely at one time to terminate his Andover career. About quarter to eight one evening, when it was already quite dark, he discovered that he had left his Latin Composition book in his seat in Pearson Hall and rushed hurriedly out of his dormitory, without troubling to put on an overcoat, in the hope that he might be able to get it. Rather to his relief, the door of the recitation hall proved to be unlocked, and, dashing up-stairs to Professor Foster's classroom on the top floor, he quickly picked up the volume which he had missed. As he stepped back into the corridor, he had a fleeting glimpse of two figures rushing rapidly down the stairs, and, although the shadows there were thick, he was sure that he recognized them as two students who sat near him in

his Virgil section. He shouted, "Hello, there!" but there was no reply, except from the reverberating echoes from wall to wall. Somewhat startled at these apparitions, Oscar turned back to the classroom which he had left, pressed the electric-light button, looked around to make sure that no one was concealed there, and even investigated the little conference-room connected with it. Nothing could he see or hear! In his bewilderment he did not think of inspecting Professor Bannard's room at the other end of the building, but decided to beat a retreat as soon as possible. When he had descended, however, he was confronted by the fact that the outside door had apparently been locked while he was upstairs and that he was therefore shut in. Again he paused for reflection. There was something mysterious abroad,—something really disturbing. It was the work of only a minute or two to enter one of the classrooms on the ground floor, unlatch a window, and let himself down six or seven feet to the solid earth. But, just as he thought himself absolutely safe, he was tapped on the shoulder by no spirit hand. Turning in some confusion, he beheld the uniformed night watchman who had the guardianship of the school plant.

"Ah, young man," ejaculated the officer of the law in a stern manner. "What are you doing leaving this building in this stealthy manner?"

"Just hunting up a text-book I left behind," explained Oscar, going on to tell how he happened to be found emerging from a window, but carefully refraining from any mention of the two figures which he had seen.

"Well, I suppose it's all right," grumbled the policeman. "But there's something funny about this. Here I come along and find the door wide open, lock it up, and then you come shooting out of a window. I'll just take down your name in case there's any trouble later. I've got to fulfill my duty." He took out a note-book, wrote down Oscar's name, with the address, "Wendell Hall," and placed the memorandum back in his pocket.

"Run along, now, or you'll be marked out," he said kindly. "It's almost eight o'clock and the last bell is ringing."

Oscar sped swiftly back to the dormitory, devoted the remainder of the evening to poring over the Latin text-book which had caused him so much annoyance, and then went to sleep,—a troubled sleep, haunted by spectres of weird shape and color, who seemed to be approaching him from

a lighted door. In the morning he awoke ready to forget the entire incident; but at chapel, after the customary prayer, hymn, and Bible-reading, the Head stood up behind the pulpit with an unusually serious expression on his face and spoke to the school:

“Gentlemen, I don’t often have to complain in this place of any deliberate mischievous and destructive acts on the part of the students at Andover. Regardless of the prevalence of banditry and lawlessness in cities, I have been sure that no such spirit exists here on this Hill. But something happened last night so outrageous that I must dwell upon it for a moment. A vandal,—I know no better word to describe him,—broke into Pearson Hall last night and deliberately mutilated one of the most beautiful statues in Professor Bannard’s Greek room,—a reproduction, the original cost of which was well over two hundred dollars. It was the act, not of a practical joker, but of a mean and malicious mind, and I cannot believe that any one of you was concerned in it. But the most careful investigation will be made of the affair, and, if any one in this audience was among the culprits, he will do well to confess to me during the morning. I can understand, toler-

ate, and even condone childish pranks which do no one any harm, but this kind of destruction to valuable property is inexcusable."

The Head's talk naturally made an impression, as he had intended it should do, and it was the most popular topic of conversation during the day. The broken fragments of the statue had been collected in the classroom which the unharmed figure had once adorned, and little clusters of boys gathered round them to see what damage had been done. Oscar himself naturally sat down in his room to think out what had occurred on that fatal night, and it occurred to him at once that he would probably be called as a witness,—the watchman would surely report his name. But, in his innocence, he never dreamed that he might himself fall under suspicion, until, at his eleven o'clock class, he was handed a note from the office ordering him to report without delay to the Head.

As it was Oscar's first summons of this nature, he was very much perturbed. Without notifying his instructor or confiding in any one, he left precipitately and ran to George Washington Hall, where the Head's Secretary asked him to be seated and wait for a moment. In a short time out came Ted Sherman, who, seeing Oscar there among the

mourners, said, "The Head's like a roaring lion this morning. If you're going in there, prepare to be chewed alive. Here all I've done is to get caught out of my 'dorm,' and you might think I had committed arson."

When Oscar was ushered into the room, he could see that the Head was not in an amiable mood.

"Good-morning, Harris," he began, in quick incisive words, sharper than Oscar had ever heard him use before. "I am told that you were seen climbing out of one of the windows in Pearson Hall last evening just before eight o'clock."

"Yes, sir, I was."

"Were you concerned, then, with the mutilation of the statue in Professor Bannard's room?"

"No, sir, I was not."

"What! You weren't? How then do you explain your presence in the building at that unusual hour?"

"I had gone back for my Latin Composition text-book, which I had left there by mistake in the afternoon."

"How did you get in?"

"I found the door unlocked, sir."

"Why, then, did you climb out the window in-

stead of walking out just as you went in?" The Head spoke as if he were confident that Oscar was in a trap.

"The door had been locked while I was upstairs by the night watchman, who had found it open when he made his inspection. Of course I couldn't get through it."

"H'm!" said the Head, in a quandary. "Your story has some plausibility. But you will admit, Harris, that it would ordinarily sound very suspicious, and that it is even more so in view of what is known to have happened in that building last evening."

"Yes, sir, I can readily see your point of view. Naturally everybody on the faculty must think that I did it. But I didn't, sir, I didn't. The facts are precisely as I have stated them."

"In spite of your declaration, Harris, we shall have to investigate your statement very carefully," announced the Head, in concluding the interview. "So far, you are unfortunately the only one who could possibly have been implicated in the affair."

"Very well, sir," said Oscar, who could only with difficulty restrain his tears. "I merely wish to tell you again that I had nothing whatever to

do with the breaking of the statue and that I am quite willing to submit to any sort of investigation which you desire to make. An innocent person ought not to be alarmed by any ordeal like that."

As he said this, Oscar looked the Head in the eyes in such a straightforward and manly fashion that the latter was much impressed. When he had first been informed by the night watchman of Oscar's unusual method of exit from Pearson Hall, he had taken it for granted that the boy had been playing what seemed to him to be a funny prank. Aware of Oscar's former reputation for "queerness," the Head arrived at the logical conclusion that this was simply another indication of his oddity. But now, as he listened to Oscar's declaration and watched his bearing, he was convinced in his heart that there must be some error somewhere.

"My boy," he said, as he stood up and placed his hand on Oscar's shoulder, "when you came in here, I had no doubt whatever that you were guilty. But I'm bound to admit that I now believe your story implicitly. If you are telling me a falsehood, then I'm no judge of character. The trouble is that all the evidence is so much

against you, and there seems to be no one else to suspect."

While the Head was speaking in this friendly fashion, Oscar was thinking of the two figures whom he had seen on the stairs. Six months before he would have blurted out the story; now he had learned better, and he merely continued to listen.

"You go out now, Harris," concluded the Head. "Don't worry at all. If I need you, I'll call you in later."

Oscar went out of the room and down the steps thoughtfully, his hands in his pockets and his mind intent on the problem in which he was so strangely involved. When he reached Wendell Hall, he described the interview to Bull, giving him also an account of what had happened on the previous evening; but he held back, even from Bull, any reference to the stealthy figures on the staircase. Before the day was over most of the school knew that Oscar Harris, the runner, was under suspicion and might be "fired." Small knots of fellows gathered here and there on the campus to talk it all over. There was a general feeling among the undergraduates that Oscar could not possibly be the miscreant, and men

whom he hardly knew stopped him just to say, "Tough luck, kiddo! I don't believe a word of it. It'll come out all right."

A famous member of the New York police force had recently lectured to the school on the finger-print method of identifying criminals and had shown slides filled with mystifying whorls and curves. It was currently reported that tell-tale finger marks had been found on some of the statue fragments and that every boy in the academy would be obliged to have his prints taken. It was rumored that three detectives had been engaged to prowl about in the dormitories hunting for evidence. Boys who were familiar with "Sherlock Holmes," "Monsieur Dupin," and "Lecoq," scented an opportunity to carry on some amateur sleuth work. There was excitement in the air like that before an Andover-Exeter game.

When Oscar had leisure later on that evening to meditate on the facts, he let his memory carry him back to the moment when he had watched the two figures rushing down to the floor below, as if engaged on some nefarious business. One he was sure was "Phil" Timian; the other he thought was "Miff" Stanley. Both belonged to what was known as a "fast crowd." Phil had an

unpleasant fox-like face, with freckles, sandy hair, and shifty blue eyes. Miff was of a different type. He had round moon-like features, chubby cheeks, and a perpetual grin, or leer, so that he resembled a guileless cherub, incapable of any deviltry or deceit. The two were invariably together, and, as the students knew, their comradeship was seldom for good. Neither one was depraved nor debauched, but no one cared to trust them very far. They had acquired a reputation for being sly and underhanded, and fellows like Steve Fisher and Joe Watson utterly despised them. Oscar had not met either Phil or Miff that morning,—in fact, he knew them only slightly,—but he could not help wishing that he could have a frank talk with one or both of them and ascertain the truth. The more consideration he gave to the matter, the more certain he became that the two must know all about the affair, even if they had not been responsible for the actual mutilation.

For two or three days the one topic of conversation at the “Beanery” and in the Grill was “Who broke up the statue?” When Oscar slipped into one of the booths at the Grill for supper, hoping to escape his well-meaning friends at the Dining Hall, he was assailed with queries

by every passer-by, "What did the Head say to you?" "Are you going to be 'fired,' Oscar?" and "Got any fresh dope to-night?" He did his best to avoid the subject, but everybody was eager for information. On the next morning he came unexpectedly on Phil and Miff talking and gesticulating very earnestly behind the Main Building and hastened to accost them, but they turned and walked away so rapidly that he could not follow without giving the impression of pursuing them, which he did not care at that time to do. In chapel they seemed to be deliberately attempting to avoid him, and once when Oscar unexpectedly confronted Miff around a corner, the latter's complacent grin was replaced by a frightened expression. All these incidents convinced Oscar that he was only too well acquainted with the perpetrators of the outrage.

On the following afternoon Oscar was summoned once more to the office,—this time into the presence of the Head and the members of the faculty discipline committee. When he was questioned, he persisted in his original account of what had occurred on that momentous evening. Finally, when the cross-examination was over and Oscar sat back in relief, the Head asked in a

casual way, "Harris, did you see any one in or near Pearson Hall that night?"

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Who was it?"

"I'm sorry that I can't inform you, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing, except that I must decline to tell you whom I saw on that evening."

"Do you realize, Harris, that you may be expelled from Andover for being connected with this unfortunate episode?"

"Yes, sir, I do, but I cannot, under the circumstances, bring evidence against my fellow students."

"So it was one of your fellow students whom you saw?" inquired the Head, suavely following the "lead" that had been given.

Oscar was much chagrined at his carelessness in revealing this detail, and made up his mind to watch his tongue. "I'm really sorry, sir, that I can't answer any more questions," he said, with a slight stammer. "If it is necessary for me to be punished for an offense in which I had no share, I'll accept the verdict. But please allow me to withdraw."

"I think that we can excuse you now, Harris,

if you wish to go. But I trust that you will reconsider your decision."

Without daring to say another word, Oscar bowed silently, and left the room, leaving the puzzled committee to talk over the situation.

"Gentlemen," resumed the Head when the door had closed, "that lad is as innocent as you or I. He is simply obsessed by that quaint schoolboy idea of honor which forbids him to 'peach' on a 'pal.' With him loyalty to a comrade has become one of the major virtues."

"That's really strange," remarked Mr. Loring. "Didn't I ever tell you that Harris was the youngster who tried to tell me last fall that somebody was cribbing in my examination? He was honestly astonished when I wouldn't listen to him."

"Well, some one has taught him the school code of honor since then," said Mr. Foxcroft. "He's as immovable as a rock at this moment. We can all recognize that, whatever he may have been earlier."

"I'm inclined to believe that his present attitude represents a higher ethical stage," commented Professor Foster, who had been keenly interested in Oscar's attitude towards his inquisi-

tors. "How about you, sir? What are your views on this delicate question of morals?"

"Under the circumstances I decline to commit myself," answered the Head, with a smile. "But I know what I should do if I were in Harris's position."

"So do we all," added Professor Foster. And the committee returned to the business at hand.

As a result of their debate, which was continued until a late hour, the Head on the next morning again spoke to the undergraduates:

"I am sorry that the one responsible for the mutilation of Professor Bannard's statue has not seen fit to confess. The faculty have already accumulated evidence against one member of the school who is known to have been in Pearson Hall on that evening. This man admits having seen at least one of his schoolmates in the building, but refuses to disclose his name. We have discovered on the fragments of the statue some finger-prints, which have been carefully preserved by a specialist and which are indubitably those of the offender or offenders. Unless the guilty persons appear before me within twenty-four hours, I shall be obliged to ask every member of the undergraduate body to have his finger-prints

taken by an expert. I intend to run this matter down, regardless of trouble or cost. I sincerely hope that those who are culpable will have the courage and the honesty to make themselves known."

Oscar glanced in the direction of Phil Timian, and noticed that he seemed red and nervous. After chapel, Oscar watched him as he joined Miff Stanley, and strolled with him slowly up to the Main Building, evidently concerned with serious problems. At last Phil, seeing Oscar behind him, halted with his companion, and the two waited side by side for Oscar to come along.

"Hello, Harris," began Phil, with a cordiality which did not have the ring of sincerity. "It has been mighty white of you not to tell on us."

"Yes," continued Miff. "You must have recognized us right away. We saw you clearly enough, and we've been worried ever since. And you could have 'squealed' on us at any time."

"Well, what are you two going to do?" inquired Oscar. "That's what seems important to me. It strikes me that it will improve things if you own up and take your punishment. You are bound to be caught sooner or later."

"Aw, I don't believe it," replied Phil, with a

snarl. "I don't want to be 'fired' any more than you do. My Dad would put me to work in a store or throw me out into the street,—I don't know which. Besides this talk about finger-prints is all 'bunk.' They haven't any clue to go on."

"I shouldn't be too certain of that," answered Oscar. "The faculty know pretty well what they are doing. Besides you ought to be men enough to own up." The Oscar who was speaking in this resolute tone was a very different boy from the Alfred Tennyson Harris who had come with his mother to Andover in the previous September.

"Look here, Harris," pleaded Miff, who was evidently more open to reason. "It wasn't anything more than a kid trick, anyway. There was nothing criminal about it. Why should there be so much excitement over an old statue?"

"Well, it's likely to cost 'Jove' Bannard or the Trustees some money to replace the thing. Personally I don't care what you do. I guess I can stand it. But I've been accused of being the one who did it, and you're making me the 'goat.' Is it playing the game square with me?"

"That's what I keep telling him," said Miff. "If you weren't mixed up in it and hadn't been so decent, I shouldn't care what happened."

"It's easy enough to advise anybody to confess," grumbled Phil, "but it's a lot harder to do it."

"I'll go with you if you like," suggested Oscar.

"No, I'm not ready yet," said Phil. "I can't just make up my mind about it."

"All right!" was Oscar's farewell remark as he ran off to class. "But the longer you wait, the worse it is going to be. It's like having a tooth pulled. Go quick, why don't you, and get the agony over?"

Oscar arrived tardy for his English class and was so busy for the rest of the morning that he gave the conversation no further thought. But on his way to lunch he saw the Head a short distance away, and, at his beckoning hand, went to meet him.

"Well, Harris," said the Head, in his usual buoyant mood, "you'll be glad to hear that we have found out the scoundrels who did the damage. Timian and Stanley have just been spending an hour in my office. I am delighted to announce that you are completely exonerated."

"What about them, sir? Will they have to be 'fired'?"

"I'm afraid that the faculty can hardly let

them off without some form of punishment. What would you do with them?" With this query, the Head looked innocently at Oscar.

"I don't know, sir. But I can guarantee that they're terrified sufficiently. I'll bet that they would reform if you could let them back."

"We can hardly do that just now, in view of the stir which they have caused, but perhaps, if they make a good record somewhere else between now and June, I may be able to persuade the faculty to let them return in the fall. We'll see."

Within a few hours Phil and Miff had packed their trunks and taken the train for Boston, on their way to their respective homes. Before they left, however, they came to Oscar's room and said a rather shamefaced "Good-bye!"

"It was a fool stunt to do," admitted Miff, "and we haven't any complaint. But I do hope I'll get another chance next year."

"Yes," added Phil, "and you've been a 'brick,' Harris. Some day I may be able to pay you."

For his part, Oscar was glad that the incident was closed. He had had a narrow escape,—one which made him shudder to think about. For by this time he had made up his mind that Andover was the finest school on earth.

CHAPTER X

THE HERO IS TRIED BY FIRE

THERE are times in any young man's development when he seems to be moving forward by leaps and bounds,—mentally and spiritually, as well as physically. Such a period Alfred Tennyson Harris, although not altogether conscious of it himself, had been going through ever since his arrival in Andover. Freed from his mother's narrowing restraint, he had taken advantage of all the opportunities which had been offered to him, and, by meeting responsibility, he had become independent. In his appearance he was, of course, much altered. His head was more erect, his bearing was more manly, and he was in robust health. Once, in midwinter, Mr. Slater, the Treasurer, met him on the street and said, "Good-morning, Harris. Has the Dining Hall food turned you into skin and bone?"

"Not exactly, sir. I've gained nearly twenty pounds since last September. That's doing pretty well, isn't it?"

"I thought that you had put on weight. But don't you remember how you came in to me to complain about the 'Beanery' food, and the lack of delicacies, like jellies and pastries?"

"I was certainly a fool, sir. The only fault I have to find with it now is that there isn't enough raw meat!"

"You're prepared to recommend it, then, are you, Harris?"

"Yes, and I'm ready to show myself as a living example of what it can do for an habitu   of Paris restaurants."

Mr. Slater smiled and went on, quite satisfied with the recantation of the former critic. And there were other changes which Oscar might have mentioned as indicative of his improved condition. To his amazement he hardly had a cold all winter,—he, who had become accustomed to staying in bed ill for weeks at a time with minor infections, such as sore throats and earaches. His power of resisting germs had increased, and he seldom now had even a headache. He might have been picked out at any time by Dr. Rogers as a specimen of perfect health.

Mentally the boy was steadily growing more mature. As he was drawn more and more into

athletics, he had less time to devote to reading, but he did, nevertheless, buy many new books; and he discovered that his fine physical condition enabled him to get through his classroom preparation in much less time than it had formerly required. Mr. Loring, who had watched his progress in English with much interest, advised him early in the term to enter the competition for the Brooks-Bryce Prize, awarded to the best article by an Andover student on the general subject of friendly Anglo-American relations. The prize was a large silver cup, presented by a generous New York lady who was interested in international affairs. Oscar did not, at first, take the suggestion very seriously; but one day in the library he came across a shelf of reference books on the assigned topic and, picking one up, became fascinated by its line of thought. He was led on gradually to more exhaustive study, until the extent of his researches made the librarian, Miss Snow, gasp with astonishment. When he had completed the stipulated three thousand words, he had it typewritten, and handed it in under an assumed name. The running-practice became more strenuous at just about this time, and Oscar forgot all about his essay.

On the Sunday afternoon before Washington's Birthday, there was a special vesper service in the chapel to commemorate the occasion. At this time an address was delivered by a professor from Harvard University, and then the Head arose and announced the winner of the Brooks-Bryce Prize. After stating the terms of the contest and thanking the donor, he went on to say that the judges,—three members of the faculty,—had awarded the trophy to the essay signed "Vera, the Dancer." There was some laughter at this peculiar *nom de plume*; and then Oscar, the most surprised man in the chapel, walked down the long aisle to receive the cup. There was tremendous applause from the student body, for Oscar had just been relieved from the suspicion of having injured the statue, and everybody was aware of his efforts to shield the real malefactors. The Head smiled as he handed the huge trophy to the winner; and Oscar grinned broadly in return. As he made his way back to his seat, the clapping redoubled. It was evidently a popular award.

A day or two later Mr. Loring called him up after class and said, "Harris, have you ever had any special training in writing?"

"No, sir,—that is, nothing unusual. I once had

a tutor who had some reputation as a biographer, and he told me some devices for building up a composition. Then my mother has a fair style, and she has given me a little instruction."

"Well, so far as I can see you have a natural gift for this kind of thing, and you have made a steady improvement. I hope that you'll be able to keep it up."

"It all depends on what I'm best fitted for, doesn't it? When Dad was alive, he always wanted me to be a lawyer, but so far I have no leaning towards that."

"There's plenty of time yet, of course. But I thought I would let you know how I feel."

"Thanks very much, sir. You're the first teacher who ever told me that he was satisfied with what I did. It helps."

"Oh, I'm not satisfied. You can do better still. But I do want you to feel encouraged. And, by the way, do you know that your winning essay will be sent in for the national competition among the successful essays from the various schools? It has a good chance for first place, I think. If you get it, you'll have another gigantic cup and a free trip to Europe."

"Well, I shall not even think about it until

the track season is over. And that's not until the close of school." And with this remark, Oscar dismissed the matter from his mind for many weeks to come.

The indications of Oscar's physical and mental progress were, perhaps, more obvious than those of his character development. Yet to those familiar with the facts, it was evident that Oscar had won the respect of his associates. Starting under an immense handicap, he had become a popular senior, and his room had become a place to which many fellows liked to come. It was not decorated, like so many, with school and college banners, photographs of beautiful "chorines," and advertising signs picked up on adventurous raids. There were tapestries in conspicuous places, and some extra pieces of furniture had been installed to supplement the standard equipment provided by the school. There were even sets of classic authors in fine bindings,—Stevenson, Hardy, Anatole France, Arthur Machen, and Hugh Walpole,—a strange and interesting assortment, displaying the catholic taste of the owner.

Oscar, as the winter term wore on, became very fond of his surroundings and kept trying to make them more attractive. He was constantly adding

new volumes to his library or buying another picture for his already crowded walls. And then, just as he began to feel entirely at home, came a tragic catastrophe.

That there was some smoking in Wendell Hall, in defiance of the regulations, Oscar well knew, and he wondered why more fellows were not caught. Mr. Randall was a very careful proctor, who attended strictly to his duties and could be counted upon to make the rounds of the different rooms at least once every evening, looking in each one just long enough to assure himself that the intimate occupants were all there and that no forbidden occupations were being pursued. As the hour of his visitation could never be accurately predicted, the boys were careful to obey the rules. Occasionally the report would be circulated that the instructor was going out to dinner or was spending the night in Boston. Then the inhibitions would be removed, and there would be a vigorous and cleansing "rough-house." Generally speaking, however, the order in Wendell Hall was excellent, and Oscar was able to devote his evenings to study without being disturbed. After ten o'clock, however, when the "house prof" had presumably retired, there was less re-

straint, and there were several men who smoked clandestinely, blowing the smoke from a "good-night" cigarette out the window or up the fireplace. Oscar himself, as soon as he took up running, dropped smoking as a habit, and had not resumed it. He knew that it was harmful to his wind, and he was not thrilled by the idea of breaking a rule merely because it was a rule. Once in a while some one he knew would be detected and placed on "Probation," but the penalty was no deterrent to inveterate cigarette fiends. These were usually, however, men of little standing in the school, who were certain to be dropped before the year was over.

One night just before the close of the winter term, Oscar, who was free for a few days from the restrictions of training, was sitting up late in front of his wood fire, intent on a book which he just discovered in the library,—Frazer's one-volume edition of *The Golden Bough*. It was so thrilling in its tales of magic and taboo that he felt almost like reading until morning; but common sense asserted itself, and, a little after midnight, he walked into the corridor to take a shower before crawling into bed. The smell of smoke assailed his nostrils, and he sniffed suspiciously as

he entered the lavatory, but finally concluded that it was only some indiscreet late tobacco maniac. His fears a little allayed, he stepped under the shower, finished his bath, and started back to his room. He could now scent a strong odor,—not cigarettes this time, but burning wood. The smell was unmistakable! Rushing downstairs, Oscar found the corridor on the second floor reeking with fumes, and he could see actual flames through a transom above his head. He tried to open the nearest door, but it was locked. Shouting at the top of his voice "Fire! Fire!" he succeeded in rousing several men, who came out in their pajamas, sleepily rubbing their eyes. The slumbers of youth are very heavy!

The heat was already suffocating, and there was no time to be lost. One intelligent boy dashed down to notify Mr. Randall and to telephone to the local fire department. A few others seized the chemical extinguishers in the corners, but it was plain that the time for their effective use had passed. Meanwhile Oscar cried, "Come here, fellows! We'll have to break down this door. Let's get a sofa and knock it through!"

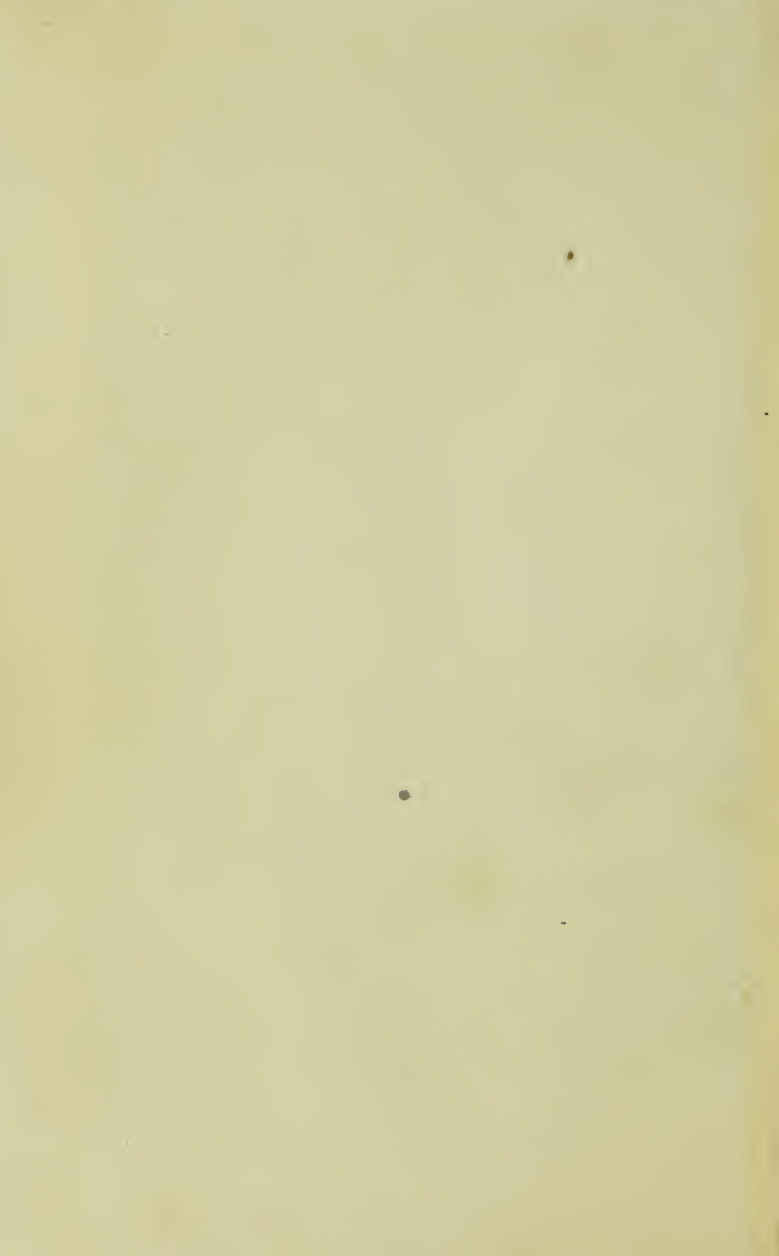
Three or four of the lustier men, including Bull Taylor, hauled out a lounge from a neighboring

room, and began the task of demolishing the locked door. Holding the solid piece of furniture up and running forward with all their force, they succeeded in driving it as a battering ram part way through the panel. One more smash and the door fell, but the flames licked out so viciously that most of the crowd dispersed. Oscar, however, had provided himself with a bath towel soaked in water, and, as the door dropped, he crawled in on his hands and knees. For a second he felt overwhelmed by the smoke, but he held the towel tight over his face and groped his way to the bedroom. There on the bed he saw very vaguely a motionless form. Throwing the figure, blankets and all, over his shoulder, he shot back as swiftly as he could, the long tongues of fire darting at him as he ran. When he reached the corridor, he slipped and fell, but strong arms dragged him away from the terrible heat. He could hear Bull Taylor say, "Good God, Oscar, we thought you had gone for good! Come along quick. Let's get out of this!"

Staggering and exhausted, Oscar let Bull take up his inert burden, and the two descended as fast as they could to the ground floor and out into the open air, where a throng of students was



STAGGERING AND EXHAUSTED, OSCAR LET BULL TAKE UP
HIS INERT BURDEN.—Page 230.



gathering. The biting wind revived Oscar at once, and he cried, "Some one get a doctor quick! This fellow's dying!" Bull and he laid the limp form on the snow and unwrapped the coverings. When the face was exposed, they saw that it was Carl Woodward, who had apparently been overcome by smoke while he was sleeping, and was thus unable to escape. Familiar with the process of resuscitation, Oscar began working desperately at the youngster's arms, moving them up and down in approved Red Cross fashion. In a few minutes, however, Dr. Runner, one of the town physicians, arrived and administered additional first-aid treatment. Oscar had been sure that Carl was dead, but, under expert care, color returned little by little to his cheeks and he began to revive.

"Here," said Dr. Runner to some of the bystanders, "it's altogether too frosty for this lad here. Take him to somebody's house,—no, I'll move him to the Infirmary in my car. Can't two of you huskies lend a hand?"

The lad was lifted into Dr. Runner's automobile, and the physician drove off. Then Oscar, his tension a bit relaxed, had time to gaze about him at a dazzling scene. There had been nearly a foot of snow on the ground, and a light rain on

the previous afternoon, turning into sleet and freezing quickly, had covered everything with an icy glare. The trees were masses of crystals, glittering in the lurid flare from the burning dormitory. The branches of shrubs and evergreens were bent over until they touched the snow, and the scintillating pendants clattered in the wind. Even in rubbers, it was not easy to stand upright, and the firemen, who had made an appearance with amazing speed, were having difficulties in managing the hose. From the roof, flames were leaping out high into the air, illuminating the sky for rods around. Two jets of water, however, were being played on the conflagration, and firemen were struggling desperately to get it under control. By this time most of the school had assembled, everybody shivering in the zero temperature. Soon Oscar saw the Head approaching.

"Great Heavens, Harris!" he cried, as he looked him over. "Haven't you any shoes on? What are you wearing under that bath-robe? Anything?"

Bewildered, Oscar looked down at his attire. He was in his bare feet, just as he had emerged from the bathroom. He felt underneath his robe. Sure enough, he was stark naked, without even

pajamas to cover him! He had been so much excited by what he had undergone that he had never noticed his lack of clothing.

Oscar attempted to stammer something, but the Head shouted to one of the instructors at his side. "Here, will you see that Harris gets down to the Infirmary? It looks to me as if he had been scorched around the face. Anyhow, he's numb with cold, and I want him put to bed immediately."

In spite of some feeble protests, Oscar was shoved into a Ford sedan by Roscoe Dale, covered with a blanket and fur coat, and rushed to the Infirmary, where the matron ordered him into a warm cot and gave him a steaming drink. Soon Dr. Runner entered and put some ointment over the blisters on his face, which were commencing to feel painful.

"I hear that you're a hero, young man," he said, as he examined his wounds. "It was mighty plucky of you to go back and save that lad's life. He would certainly have burned to death if you hadn't pulled him out."

Oscar was too much exhausted to say anything original in reply. Instead he made the customary story-book answer. "It wasn't anything, Doc.

Anybody would have done it. But I'm glad that he will get well."

"Yes, he had a fairly close call, and two or three minutes more of that smoke might have finished him. But he has a good constitution, and he'll be around in a week, just as well as ever."

When the physician and the nurse had left, Oscar still lay awake, tired though he was, looking out the window at the tongues of flame as they rose and fell. From his bed on the east side of the Infirmary he could watch the glare and could even hear the shouts of the firemen as they fought the blaze. Little by little, however, the redness died away, and Oscar, overcome with weariness, sank tranquilly to slumber.

When he awoke, he saw a pretty nurse gazing at him. Where was he? Oh, yes, he remembered! He reached out his arms and felt of his face and neck, only to find that they were covered with bandages. He tried to raise himself up, but perceived that his back and legs were very sore.

"You'd better take it easy," said the nurse, smilingly. "You're not as strong as you think you are. Wait until we've bathed and massaged you, and then you can try sitting up."

"My, am I so badly off as that?" Oscar asked.

"Oh, no, you're not really sick,—just a trifle weak from shock. You're not going to be with us long as a patient."

"All right, nurse. But tell me, how is Carl Woodward getting along?"

"Is he the boy who was brought here just before you last evening?"

"Yes, that's the one."

"Oh, he's fine. He didn't get burned any to speak of. He just swallowed a lot of smoke."

"Oh, nurse," asked Oscar, raising himself up again, "am I so much injured that I'll have to stop running?"

"Goodness, no," answered the young lady. "You have one or two painful burns on your face, but your eyes weren't touched and your legs and lungs are quite all right. You won't suffer any permanent damage, except possibly a scar or two on your cheeks."

"Thank Heaven!" said Oscar, whose one apprehension had been that he might have to abandon his track work. "I don't worry about my face. I don't care about that at all, for any change will be an improvement. But I should be broken-hearted not to be able to run."

Oscar was able to sit up a little later and de-

molish a grape-fruit, two dishes of cereal, plenty of bacon and eggs, a plate of toast, and several cups of cocoa. The process of eating was not altogether pleasant, but he was the victim of a colossal hunger. Later, after Dr. Runner had examined his burns and replaced his bandages, Oscar walked to a chair near the window and gazed out at the blackened roof of the dormitory, where the fire had raged so devastatingly on the previous evening. The glamor of the scene had entirely gone. Evidently the firemen had succeeded in checking the blaze before it reached the lower rooms, for the first floor seemed to be uninjured. All around the building, however, the snow was tramped down by hundreds of feet, and there were desolate-looking piles of furniture, pictures, and books scattered here and there, where they had been deposited the night before. Little was left of the top story except charred timbers, and it was clear to Oscar that he had lost all his belongings,—even his clothes. He had literally nothing of his own to wear except one bathrobe. He had to smile as he thought that he had hardly a possession left in the world. Even his copy of *Eric, or Little by Little*, had vanished in the flames. He would have to start again.

As the day went along, Oscar's ward became a kind of reception-room, and visitor after visitor arrived to call upon him. Steve Fisher, Joe Watson, Kid Wing, Bull Taylor,—all these friends came with wearing apparel to place at his disposal, until he had a miscellaneous collection of knickerbockers, shoes, shirts, neckties, and other haberdashery sufficient to stock a store. Shep and Larry Spear came in together to cheer him up and assure him that he would soon be on the cinder path again. Oscar, with great strips of gauze around his head, only his eyes and mouth visible, greeted them one after another. Just before noon the Head stepped in, very solicitous about his burns; but Dr. Runner, who happened to be there at the time, declared that they were only superficial.

“How this fellow escaped without any more serious disability, I can't understand,” said the physician, pointing to Oscar. “He was right in the midst of the flames, and yet he was merely scorched. It's lucky for him, of course, that he had those damp towels over his face. Otherwise he might have lost his eyesight.”

“The good die young,” interposed Oscar whimsically. “I'm too tough a nut to kill, Doc.”

"I'm glad you're still cheerful," said the Head. "You'll need all your courage. I must tell you that everything in your room was burned up."

"I supposed so," was Oscar's answer. "But I honestly don't care just so long as my running won't be interfered with. I can buy new clothes, but not new legs."

"You'll be on the track in ten days," said Dr. Runner.

"That's great, sir!" said Oscar gleefully. "And would you mind telling me where I can find a place to live for the rest of the year?"

"That's going to be easy," answered the Head, who had already settled that matter. "Hal Manning says that he has plenty of space for you in his suite over in Phillips Hall, and you can go there if you like. Would that suit you?"

"That will be bully, sir," commented Oscar, who was very fond of Hal. "Just so long as I have a cot and a few clothes I'll be all right."

Before the day was over Hal Manning appeared himself to present the invitation, doing it in so gracious a manner that Oscar could not help accepting the offer. Now that both boys were in "K. P. N.," the problem was simplified, and Oscar felt as if he had another friend besides Bull Tay-

lor. Later on, Oscar found that similar arrangements had been made for the housing of all the homeless refugees who had resided in Wendell Hall, and, by a process of doubling up, they had all been distributed among the other dormitories.

Oscar was much embarrassed to find himself a school hero. Bull Taylor, who had escaped uninjured, told the story of Oscar's deeds everywhere, and the episode bade fair to go down in the annals with the tale of the Andover graduate who so gallantly sacrificed his life in an effort to save women and children at a fire in a New Haven moving-picture theatre. Boston newspapers sent reporters out to get the news and published a full account, including Oscar's picture in running-trunks and track-shirt. Mrs. Woodward, who came on from Kentucky to nurse her son, nearly overwhelmed him with gratitude. All sorts of delicacies were showered upon him,—avocado pears, California dates, enormous grape-fruit, and boxes of chocolates,—more than he could have eaten in a month. There were moments when Oscar felt as if he would like “to fade away unto the forest dim,” where he could escape the attention of the grateful mother.

Oscar remained in the Infirmary until the term

closed, making sure that his burns were properly healed and taking his final examinations there by a special dispensation. When school was over, he managed, in borrowed finery, to motor into Boston with Hal Manning, where he accumulated an entire new stock of clothing. His purchases at one or two stores almost led the clerks to believe that he was going into business for himself. Suitably equipped with raiment, he spent a week at Hal Manning's home on Commonwealth Avenue, where he soon became a favorite with the family. He had one delightful evening when Hal's sister, Janet, now Mrs. Edward J. Hopkins, who lived in Dedham, came in and told Oscar of her flirtation with Steve Fisher, when Steve was a "prep" at Andover. She described the affair with so much humor that the family were in shrieks of laughter; and Oscar treasured it in his mind to use in case Steve ever tried to ridicule him at the "K. P. N." house. He recognized the value of a weapon of retaliation when jokes were passing.

It was hard for Oscar to leave the Manning home, with its warm hospitality and its attractiveness, and Mrs. Manning, a motherly kind of woman who had taken a fancy to Oscar, kept urging him to stay longer. But Oscar was eager to

get out on the track once more and try his legs; furthermore he wanted to get settled in Hal's quarters in Phillips Hall so that all would be ready when the spring term opened. Early in April, then, Oscar returned to Andover Hill and established himself in Hal's room on the third floor. Anxious to contribute his share to the joint establishment, he depleted his bank account by purchasing some new furniture and a few choice engravings for the walls. But it was already so well supplied with the luxuries of school life that there was little which he could add without turning it into a museum.

On the afternoon of his return,—a windy, cloudy, unpleasant day, with mud everywhere under foot,—Oscar strolled across Main Street to look at his last term's home. There it stood, with charred timbers and rubbish all around, the workmen already starting to clear away the débris preparatory to rebuilding. As he was gazing sadly and reminiscently at the wreckage, recalling the comfort of his former quarters on the third story and lamenting his treasures which had been destroyed, Mr. Randall, who had seen him from his study window, came out to welcome him.

“Hello,” he said, in his slow voice. “I’m glad

to see that you've fully recovered. You look just about as good as new. And I'm mighty sorry that you are going to leave Wendell Hall. We'll miss you."

"Thank you, sir. I was just thinking as I was standing here how sad it makes me feel to move. I hope that your part of the dormitory was not injured."

"We had some water leak through the ceilings, but it wasn't anything serious. It looks now as if we could stay here while they do the necessary repairing up above."

"That's fine," said Oscar. "You're better off than I am."

"I suppose," asked Mr. Randall, "that no one is making any inquiries as to how the blaze started?" There was a twinkle in his eye as he propounded the query.

"No, I imagine not," replied Oscar with equal seriousness. "But I guess Carl Woodward could tell a good deal about it. However, I'm not going to ask him."

"His carelessness has cost the school a good deal of money and trouble," said Mr. Randall, with the air of one stating a fact,—not placing the blame.

"When I saw him a week ago, he looked like a fellow who had learned a lesson," commented Oscar.

"Good!" was the instructor's answer. "And, by the way, Harris, I have never had a chance to tell you how much I admired your conduct ——"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Oscar precipitately, recognizing the preliminaries to another eulogy and unwilling to face it. "I had almost forgotten my engagement over in the office. Good-bye!" And he rushed off like a dog running to escape a beating.

Mr. Randall, when he was once more in the precincts of his library, turned to his wife, who was peacefully mending socks in front of the fire, and directed his comments to her. "There's a boy who has certainly made good here," he said. "We have plenty of disappointments in my profession, and there are moments when I am sure that I personally am getting worse every year as a trainer of boys; but this Harris is one of our shining successes."

Like all teachers, Mr. Randall was inclined to claim the credit when one of the boys in his dormitory did well, and to attribute all the failures to the "cussedness" of human nature. It is too

bad, however, that he could not have heard Oscar reciting, as he walked back to his room, a stanza from a poem which he had just learned:

“It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the Master of my Fate!
I am the Captain of my Soul! ”

He would have been sure, then, that Oscar, the one-time “freak,” had graduated into manhood.

CHAPTER XI

THE HERO REACHES HIS GOAL

WHEN Oscar came back to Andover after his brief visit at the Manning house in Boston, he was much disconcerted to find mud and water everywhere on the campus. He recalled March and April on the Mediterranean as being delightful months, and he had rather expected the same conditions in New England. Instead he ran into a three-days' storm of wind and rain, during most of which he was glad enough to build up a fire in Hal's room and sit idly in front of it, making his plans for the spring. He did, however, wade through the shallow pools to the Case Memorial, where he resumed his running practice, finding, to his satisfaction, that his burns had not affected him in the slightest. Indeed, it is probable that the enforced rest was really helpful in keeping him in the best of condition.

It happened that Steve Fisher, whose home was in Montana, was also marooned in Andover during the vacation, and the two young men became very well acquainted. Steve, although he was a

member of "K. P. N." with Oscar, was the acknowledged leader of the school, and Oscar naturally felt a bit shy at first in talking to him. But he found Steve so completely free from conceit or condescension that it was easy to be at home with him. The two met at first in the Case Memorial, where Steve was practising curves and drops every afternoon,—he was captain of the nine and its first-string pitcher; later Steve invited Oscar to his room, in Bartlet Hall, where they discussed affairs of the world, from prohibition to evolution, settling each in the offhand manner so characteristic of the younger generation.

A day or two before the vacation was over, the mud dried up, and it became feasible for Oscar to get outdoors on the regular cinder track. He now felt supremely happy, for it seemed as if new vigor had come to him with the return of warmth and sunshine. All the unmistakable signs of spring were at hand. Men with iron prongs on sticks were prowling stealthily about the campus picking up the scattered bits of paper and tinfoil and the countless lost shoe-buckles dropped during the winter from seven hundred pairs of "arctics"; laborers were rolling the playing fields

and removing the board walks; and here and there carpenters were making the necessary repairs and alterations on the buildings. The more enterprising robins had already appeared, and the buds were showing on the maple branches. Best of all, there was a kind of freshness in the air, which made the blood in young men's veins flow like the fresh sap in the trees. Oscar could see why primitive peoples celebrate the Easter season as a resurrection,—the awakening of the world from an unprolific slumber.

On the evening when the students returned for the spring term, the sun went down in gorgeous colors behind the distant hills, with promise of pleasant days to come. As the residents of Phillips Hall drove up one by one with their suitcases, they greeted Oscar in friendly fashion, frankly glad to have him one of their number. Carl Woodward, who had once resented being chastised by Oscar, now was ready to become his grateful satellite, and shouted out a joyous, "Hi, Oscar!" as he saw him on the terrace. Bull Taylor, who was doubling up with a friend in Bartlet Hall, was once more on hand, gleeful because he had received high-enough grades to win a full scholarship once more. Altogether it was an hi-

larious reunion which the inmates of Phillips and Bartlet Halls had that evening, and Oscar had no regrets at being no longer in Wendell. As a matter of fact he soon came to realize that it was beneficial for him to be thrown more with the older and stronger men in the senior class. He was greeted by them as an equal, and he saw that he could associate with them on even terms. For this he was devoutly thankful.

It amazed him to see how busy most of these seniors really were. They rarely indulged in a rough-house in the dormitory; they were careful to keep their records free from "cuts" and "demerits"; and they worked harder at their studies than the younger fellows who had been in Wendell Hall with Oscar. Furthermore, each man seemed to have some outside activity which occupied his spare hours,—some form of sport, debating, music, the school papers, or the Society of Inquiry,—and everybody assumed that everybody else had something important to do. It was an atmosphere in which everybody was stimulated to do his best.

I may as well admit the truth at once,—although it may not please some of my older readers,—and state that Oscar's mind for the next few

weeks was primarily on his running and the possibilities of a victory in the coming track meet. This was his primary avocation, perhaps even for the moment his vocation. He maintained a satisfactory grade in his studies, it is true, and did not fail in his recitations; indeed "Charlie" Foster complimented him more than once on the facility with which he turned Horace into English verse. But deep down in his heart Oscar was aiming at just one thing,—to win the mile run in the dual meet. His success in the "B. A. A." relay had given him the right to wear the coveted "A," but he was far from being content with that achievement. He wanted, perhaps, to prove to himself that he was an all-round man; he longed for the prestige which belongs to the victor in some athletic event; he desired to show that he was more than just a mere "plugger." But, whatever the motive, or motives, may have been, he gave himself body and soul to his work on the track.

On every afternoon, then, Oscar appeared at two o'clock ready to follow Larry Spear's instructions. Often he would spend half an hour practising starts. Sometimes he would jog for a few minutes and go straight in for a rub-down. The

coach would make him run an occasional 440 yards or 880 yards at top speed, with the idea, he explained, of developing Oscar's endurance and swiftness. Only once every week did he cover the full course of a mile. Even then, Larry, although he had his watch out and was evidently taking the time, would not tell it to Oscar. This is a little meanness which many coaches have,—similar in principle to the policy adopted by many physicians of refusing to tell a patient his temperature or his blood pressure. Oscar could guess that he was steadily improving, but he was unable to find out from Larry's manner just what the latter really felt in his heart.

Larry had to warn him repeatedly not to do too much. "You need to be careful, Harris," he said, "not to get over-trained. You will learn through sad experience some day that it's just as disastrous to be stale as it is to take too little exercise. There's a happy medium somewhere, and you've got to discover where it is. I'm glad that you're so much like a race-horse, but you must keep yourself under control. Otherwise all our labor will have been for nothing."

Joe Watson, the hammer-thrower, was captain of the team, and occasionally used to watch Oscar

as the latter's long legs went rhythmically around the track. Joe was not a communicative person. It was his custom to sit in silence while the more loquacious Ted Sherman and Hal Manning babbled about the universe. But one day, as Oscar and he sat in the sun resting for a moment, Joe turned and said, "Oscar, can you remember back to the time when you entered Andover last September?"

"Yes, of course I do. You mean the morning when I asked you the way to Wendell Hall? Say, I've often thought how kind you were to me that day! I must have been as raw as a turnip. I'm not much to boast of now, but I must have looked to you then like the inmate of some institution for the feeble-minded."

"You're right! I'm not going to deny it. The funny part is that Hal Manning and Ted Sherman were ready to bet a lot of coin that you would not stay in school until Christmas. And look at you now! On the track team, with an 'A,' and in Hal Manning's crowd,—which is pretty near as good as my own! And actually rooming with Hal Manning himself! When you think of it, it's stranger than fiction."

"Of course most of it is just luck. I know

that," replied Oscar. "But when I think back and recall what a donkey I was, I wonder how they ever allowed me to take up space in a dormitory. I suppose that some kindly god protects the stupid."

"I guess so, or else I'd never be here, either," commented Joe. And he got up lazily to have another fling with the hammer before going in for the afternoon.

The first track meet of the season was with the Harvard Freshmen, who came to Andover late in April, on a damp, cold day. Oscar, who had never taken part in a race on a cinder path, was naturally impatient to see what he could do. By this time it had been settled that he should concentrate on the mile. Phil Allen could very well take care of the quarter, leaving Kid Wing and Oscar for the longer distance. The half was to be in the hands of Fritz Allis and Barney Wright, although Mr. Spear was well aware that, in the Exeter meet, he should have to use Phil Allen in both the quarter and the half. Being a highly intelligent coach, however, he was letting Phil run only the furlong distance for the present, hoping against hope that some good half-miler might by a miracle appear.

In the Freshman meet, Oscar, standing with Kid Wing and the other veterans at the starting-line, made up his mind that he would show Larry what he could do. Getting off slightly ahead of the others, he resolved to set the pace for the full distance. He covered the first quarter at top speed, in not much above sixty seconds, and saw that he was well to the front. Pleased at his success, he maintained a stiff pace for the next two laps, the positions of the Harvard men remaining much the same. As he started the last quarter, he felt rather tired, but resolved to hold his lead at all costs. Gritting his teeth, he kept on, but an infallible sixth sense told him that the others were creeping up on him. He dug in with all his strength, but his legs were like lead. As he struggled down the back stretch, one Harvard man came up to his side, and, in spite of all he could do, passed him, with a sprint which Oscar tried in vain to emulate. In the last one hundred yards Oscar simply "faded." He was completely "run out." When Kid Wing and a second Harvard man passed him just before they reached the tape, he was too much exhausted to do anything more than stagger across and get his breath as

soon as possible. He had come in fourth in a race which he had started out to win.

That evening in a quiet half-hour in his room, Larry took Oscar aside for some sound advice. "See here, Harris," he began, "you ought to make a clever runner, for you have some intelligence besides a good pair of legs and sound lungs. But you are not using your brain at all. Now I let you start in that race without any instructions whatever simply because I wanted to see what you would do. You acted just like the typical greenhorn,—no strategy, no attempt to outguess the other man. You behaved as if you had no knowledge of your strength or of the distance which you were running. Naturally you just ran yourself out and beat yourself. It was a foolish plan to follow. You can defeat that Harvard man in nine races out of ten, but you can't give him all the face-cards and expect to win the game. That's impossible."

"Won't you tell me what to do next time, Mr. Spear? I need all the help I can get."

"Perhaps I will, if it seems necessary. What I'm trying to say now is that you ought to know yourself and your capabilities thoroughly. There are some men, of course, whom you can run right

off their feet; but there are a few, like that Harvard fellow to-day, who just love to be paced for three laps, and who can then come up fresh for a final sprint and carry off the gold medal."

Oscar did more than listen carefully to Larry's injunctions; he went back to his room and thought the problem out. He saw at once that it would be impossible for him to size up an opponent merely by hastily looking him over. Often an unpromising physical specimen might be very dangerous on the track. If he could run against a man just once, Oscar felt that he could get some idea of what his psychology would be like. But the really vital thing for Oscar at that stage was to study himself,—to learn how to manage himself in such a way as to bring out all his speed and endurance. He recognized that, in every important race, there are points at which a runner has to make a quick decision,—whether he shall pass a weaker rival or let him continue to set the pace, for instance,—but he was sure now that the fundamental principle was to get acquainted with his own strength and weaknesses.

In early May the track squad went to New Haven to compete against the Yale Freshmen, and Oscar had his first opportunity of inspecting

that college, where he was already entered. Each team at Andover is allowed one trip away from the school during the season, always accompanied, of course, by a teacher. Oscar and his mates were royally entertained in New Haven, and he met what seemed to him to be hundreds of old Andover men, each of whom seemed a cordial host. With the former "K. P. N." members, he was soon on intimate terms, and he could appreciate how important such a society affiliation might become. What pleased him most, however, was the consciousness that he was treated, not as a "freak," but as an equal, a person who was entirely sane and normal.

The mile run in an ordinary track meet is the third running event, coming after the 100-yard dash and the 120-yard high hurdles. It is seldom possible at that stage of the proceedings to predict how the scoring is likely to turn out, and the mile run to the uninformed spectator does not seem to be a decisive race. But the real track "fan" keeps what is called a "dope sheet," on which the probable results are recorded; and an upset in one event may, to those "on the inside," change the whole prospect for one side or the other. Oscar was well aware that, on the Andover

"dope sheets," he was scheduled to come in third. He was not much complimented at this prediction, and wanted to falsify it if he could.

Six of them lined up at the starting point,—Kid Wing, Oscar, and an untried youngster named George Westcott, for Andover, the Yale trio being headed by "Mac" Smith, an old Andoverian, about whom Larry had told him a great deal. When the pistol shot off, Oscar waited to fall in behind Smith, who, however, was in no hurry. They started at a fairly slow pace, much slower than that to which Oscar had been accustomed, but he had been warned of Smith's tricks and he resolved not to be outgeneralled. On the second lap, Kid Wing, usually considered to be a steady plodder, shot into the lead and quickened the pace, but even this did not disturb Smith. The third lap saw the order remaining the same; but, as the final quarter opened, Smith easily went by Kid Wing and Oscar followed. This time Oscar felt fresh and strong, ready for a fast sprint. Smith speeded up, but Oscar stuck at his heels. Around the last curve and down the home stretch they dashed, neck and neck, the others several yards in the rear. Just before they reached the tape, Smith put forth an unexpected ounce or

two of "drive" and shot ahead by inches. It was a glorious race, and the time,—four minutes, thirty-eight seconds,—was excellent for that point in the season. It was some consolation to Oscar that he had performed with intelligence. It was no disgrace whatever to be defeated by a better man,—and Smith was better than he.

In the meet with the Dartmouth Freshmen, Oscar won his race with ease, in four minutes, forty seconds, but he was not pushed. This, his first real victory in any track competition, gave him the confidence of which he was so badly in need. By this time it had become evident that he was running better than Kid Wing and that the Andover hope of success in the mile would rest on him. Kid was a star in cross-country running and was later to be an intercollegiate champion in the two-mile race; but there is no two-mile event in interscholastic athletics, it being considered that it is too exhausting for growing boys. Kid accepted Oscar's progress in the most generous way, merely saying, "Well, you can beat me, all right. I admit it. What I'm going to try to do from this time on is to help you to get first place."

The so-called Harvard Interscholastics, held in

Cambridge, gave Oscar a chance to measure his ability against that of the best runners from other schools, especially Exeter's star, "Red" O'Brien, who had an established reputation, with firsts to his credit in the two most recent Andover-Exeter meets.

"Oscar," said Larry, as the boy was undressing for his race, "you must watch this O'Brien. Study his stride and the system that he follows. He's the man you've got to beat next Saturday. I don't care so much what you do this afternoon, but it's your job to learn all about him so that you can win from him at Andover."

Oscar found the famous O'Brien to be a rather short but very stocky lad, with muscular calves and a vast expanse of chest. His stride was rather shorter than Oscar's, but he looked as if he could keep going until Doomsday. His favorite procedure in the past had been to kill off his opponents one by one by setting a terrific pace at the start, confident that there would be no one among them who would be his equal. This method he tried again at Harvard, but Oscar stayed close to him for the first half-mile. O'Brien was manifestly taken aback at seeing this new Andover athlete,—of whom he had heard

nothing since the relay race during the winter,—right behind him. He slowed down perceptibly for the third quarter, hoping that Oscar could be lured into trying a sprint; but the latter had learned too much to attempt that. Finally, two hundred yards from the finish, O'Brien leaped forward into the sprint for which he was so well known. At the same time, but just a trifle too slowly, Oscar started. Down the stretch they swept, Oscar holding his own with the Exeter man but unable to gain an inch; and so they crossed the finish line, O'Brien the winner by two feet. As Oscar regained his breath, he saw his rival at his side reaching out his hands. "That's a bully race you ran, Harris. You gave me the surprise of my life. I hope that we'll have just as good a one next week."

"Thanks, O'Brien. You certainly can run," said Oscar, still a little winded. "I don't see now how I stuck to you so long."

"I know," answered O'Brien, "and I'm just a little afraid of what you may do."

And so, in a spirit of strong but friendly rivalry, the representatives of the two great schools prepared for the final contest, neither quite sure that he could defeat the other, but each hopeful.

During the week preceding the big meet Oscar felt as if he were dwelling in a rarefied atmosphere. At the chapel service every morning the students cheered and applauded each track man as he entered, until the building fairly quivered with the tumult. Pedants may denounce competition in athletics as placing the emphasis on the wrong things, but all men who are young in body or spirit are bound to admire physical prowess. To Oscar there was something in the approbation of his fellows that was very sweet, and their approval gave him the confidence which he needed. Even the tiniest "prep" had his carefully prepared "dope sheet," on which the events were tabulated, with an assignment of points to each school on the basis of past performance. During the Sunday sermon Oscar was amused to find one neighbor, Tom Hayden, working out a prediction in the back of his hymn book, and another making a drawing of Joe Watson hurling the hammer an unprecedented distance. No one who has never been near a great American school before an important contest can realize how intense the feeling is and how anxiously the undergraduates await the outcome.

On Thursday afternoon the school in a body

marched to Brothers' Field, carrying blue megaphones ornamented with white "A's," and cheered the track squad. On Friday evening the customary mass meeting was held in the Gymnasium,—a noisy gathering, at which school spirit ran high and the smaller boys bellowed themselves hoarse. Fletcher, '08, the author of those stirring songs, "Fighting for Old P. A.!" and "Andover Royal Blue!" came out from Boston just to play them on the piano and lead the crowd in the singing. "Charlie" Foster, Shep, Larry Spear, and the Head all made brief speeches, telling a funny story or two and urging everybody to cheer the team on to victory. At intervals there would be a staccato chant, "We want Georgy! We want Georgy!" as the mob demanded some old favorite; and the popular teacher, escorted by two sturdy cheer-leaders, would march to the platform between walls of yelling undergraduates. The scene was so picturesque that alumni often came from a distance just to get once more in touch with the school which they had known, and renew the joyful feeling of other days.

At the football mass-meeting in the fall Oscar had been very little stirred, but had shouted in a routine and phlegmatic way, his only desire being

to avoid criticism. Now he sat quietly in the gallery and listened while the boys gave cheer after cheer, one of them ending with his own name, "Harris! Harris! Harris!" Then, at the order of Coach Shepley, he walked slowly to his room, read a humorous novel by P. G. Wodehouse, and went to bed. Of course he tried to sleep, but it was difficult. He counted sheep jumping over a fence; he played an imaginary golf course, holding out impossible shots for "birdies" and "eagles"; he recited Alfred Noyes's poem, *The Barrel Organ*, which he had learned some weeks before when that poet visited Andover; and then, just as he was about to despair, came oblivion.

When he awoke at seven o'clock, he could see the sunlight gleaming on the dew-covered grass and was glad to know that the track would be dry. Of course he was excited. It would be ridiculous to deny it. But, in spite of his rapid heart action, he tried by an effort of the will to conserve energy and keep himself under control. At breakfast and chapel dozens of friends wished him success until he was weary of mumbling the conventional "Thanks!" He sat through his two classes in a state of anesthesia, his instructors being kind enough not to call on him,—even teachers have

a human side. All that Oscar could think of while Mr. Loring was reciting:

“The Sun’s rim dips; the stars rush out:
At one stride comes the dark,”

was about the kind of a stride that Red O’Brien would take that afternoon as he dashed away from the starting-line. “It’ll be more than one stride,” thought Oscar whimsically to himself; but just then the bell rang for the close of the hour, and he was free. He had a light lunch at eleven-thirty, after which he lay down in his room for an hour. At last, at one-thirty, he was allowed to go to the Gymnasium and don his running clothes. Once in these, with a light sweater over his chest, he felt calmer in his mind. The moment of supreme trial was at hand.

Stretched out on the grass in the hot glow of the sun, Oscar idly watched the spectators taking their places in the stands,—pretty girls with colored gowns, middle-aged graduates in linen knickerbockers and gay golf stockings, and then the Exeter student body marching in column of fours and reciting the monotonous “E-X-E-T-E-R” in slow unison, giving each separate letter full stress. The Andover undergraduates followed through

another gateway, headed by a military band and a spreading blue banner carried by stalwart arms. When these two groups were seated, the benches looked like one conglomerate mass of red and blue and yellow and white, as if the elements of the spectrum had been scattered there by some careless god. Oscar saw the cheer-leaders hold a consultation and then begin their strange dance in front of the bleachers, like priests of some Polynesian religion carrying on their barbaric rites, their arms waving simultaneously in the air. Then came the crash and echo of the cheers. The home school gave a "long Andover" for its opponents, and Exeter returned the compliment. This interchange of amenities was followed by a medley of cheers, in which a variety of personages were honored,—the coaches, the captains, and the athletes,—until there was a lull, explicable by the fact that the hundred-yard dash was about to start.

As Oscar listened to the organized cheering from the stands, he went over the situation in his mind, as he had discussed it with Shep on the previous afternoon. Those most fully informed admitted that the meet was bound to be very close and that a second or third place won unexpectedly by

either school might decide the result. For the moment we are interested primarily in the mile run. Two of Exeter's entries, Red O'Brien and Fred Jones, were conceded to be superior to any Andover runner except Oscar. Kid Wing was not at his best in the mile, and, although he was planning to run, it was not anticipated that he would win a point. George Westcott had no function except to swell the number of entries and to acquire experience for another season. Oscar was Andover's only hope,—and the newspapers on the evening before had been unanimous in their conclusion that the odds were in favor of Red O'Brien, the veteran of many contests.

Points in the Andover-Exeter meet are awarded five to first place, three to second, and one to third. If Oscar could take first place, it would be a notable triumph for his school, even though Exeter did secure the other four points. On the other hand, if Oscar were driven back to second or third and scored only a meagre one or three points, the New Hampshire "rooters" would feel that they had gained a decisive advantage. Conscious of these possibilities, Oscar knew that the crowd would have their eyes on him from the start. It might be that he could win or lose the meet.

In the hundred-yard dash Exeter had taken the two first places, and the figures chalked up on the score board were 8-1. In the high hurdles, however, Len Whitney, Andover's star, justified expectations by coming in far ahead of any competitor. Presently Oscar heard the call for the mile, and stood up, rubbing his legs to limber up the muscles. As he reached the starting point, he met Red O'Brien, who shook hands with him cordially.

"Well, Harris, this ought to be a good race for us. We'll have a real fight to-day. This is my last for Exeter, you know."

"Same for me here at Andover," replied Oscar. "I graduate this June, too. I sure am going to work hard to beat you, O'Brien."

"Go to it!" was O'Brien's comment. From that moment the contest was on.

The six men lined up across the track and dug little holes in the cinders for their toes. O'Brien drew the pole position, and the hordes from Exeter shouted wildly at this supposed advantage. Oscar took the next place, and the others alternated along the line. There was a moment's pause while the starter delivered his instructions, warning them not to crowd on the first turn and

not to cut in towards the pole without being a full stride ahead. Then there was quiet! "Get ready! Get on your marks! Get set! Bang!"

They were off, with an Exeter man, Fred Jones, in the lead, followed by Red O'Brien and Oscar, the other three trailing. Jones had been coached to set a brisk pace for the first quarter, but Oscar did not object so long as Red O'Brien was going at the same gait. They were maintaining the same relative positions as they swept by the stands once more; and Larry Spear noted, with a glance at his watch, that they had covered the first quarter in sixty-five seconds,—fast time for schoolboy running.

As the second lap began, Jones slowed down and Red shot past him, followed, of course, by Oscar. It was quite obvious that Jones had done his part and would content himself by making sure of third. At the end of the lap, O'Brien and Oscar were still going strong, but the others were slowly dropping behind, poor Kid Wing, who was out of condition, falling to the rear. The third quarter was noticeably slower, both Oscar and Red husbanding their strength for the finish. As they came by the stands once more, the pistol rang out indicating that there was but one more

lap, and the Andover "rooters" yelled frantically, "Go it, Harris!" "Beat that red-head!" and "You're the baby, Oscar!"

It would not be exact to say that Oscar was fresh at this point. His breath was coming hard and he was tired, but he knew his capabilities and felt good for the final struggle. He had a feeling, moreover, that O'Brien, in taking the pace for two laps, had worn himself out just a little. Down the back stretch, therefore, he began his sprint, rather earlier than O'Brien had anticipated. With a bound Oscar was by Red's side, and they went along neck and neck in a magnificent contest for supremacy. As they reached the curve, it was difficult for the spectators to see who was leading; but those at the western end of the bleachers could note that, as they came into the last straightaway, Oscar was ahead by inches. Down they came, each man with muscles tense, teeth clenched, fists tight, swinging his arms to secure more power for his leg drive,—each with desperation on his face, giving every last ounce of strength.

For a second it seemed as if O'Brien were drawing up, but Oscar, with a superb last effort, drove his weary body forward by sheer force of

will and broke the tape a foot in front of his gallant Exeter rival!

The mass of humanity on the Andover benches rose as a single unit, waving arms, yelling raucously, and hurling hats into the air. The band, inspired by the occasion, burst automatically into "Old P. A." Oscar himself was supported by strong arms, from which he had to fight to free himself. He felt as if a million people were slapping him on the back and crying "Bully for you, Oscar!" In a few seconds, however, he regained his breath and straightened up just in time to receive the congratulations of his late foe, Red O'Brien.

"You fairly ran me off my feet, Harris," said the chivalrous Exeter veteran, between gasps. "But it was a good race. I wonder what the time was?"

They listened as the announcer bellowed through his gigantic megaphone: "Results of the one mile run. Won by Number 36, Harris, of Andover; second, Number 77, O'Brien, of Exeter; third, Number 21, Jones, of Exeter. Time, four minutes, thirty-five and two-fifths seconds." It was the fastest time Oscar had ever made officially, and it was within two seconds of the dual

meet record, set thirty years before by an Andover athlete, William T. Laing.

Oscar was glad enough to jog off to the Gymnasium without waiting for the remaining events. From time to time, however, some one brought him news of what was going on: how Len Whitney broke the world's interscholastic record in the low hurdles, how Exeter's captain, "Si" Beeson, took first in the high jump, and how Phil Allen justified the hopes of his admirers by winning the quarter-mile. The meet, as he could readily see in checking up the points, was very close. And then, as he was putting on his street clothes after a rubdown and a plunge in the pool, he heard a confusion of voices, and learned that "Spider" Drummond, a rank outsider, had, in a last tremendous effort, excelled all his previous performances in the shot-put by three feet, thus taking second place in that event and winning the meet for Andover.

It was impossible for Oscar to escape from the intrusion of admiring but inconsiderate friends, and for a few moments he could not get into the open air. Before long, however, Larry Spear came along and led him out of the crowd. "Let's get away from this," he said. "I know exactly how

you feel, Oscar, because I've been there myself so many times. You want to be by yourself, don't you?"

"I like to have you around, Larry," replied Oscar, who was by this time on intimate terms with the coach. "But I certainly do hate to have a hundred men whom I hardly know praising me just because I happen to be a good athlete. Most of them wouldn't have spoken to me six months ago."

"That's life, Oscar. You'll learn that lesson quickly. But what I want to say now is that you ran a bully race. I never saw a better one. You used your head like an old-timer. Great work for a man so new to it!"

"Much obliged for those kind words," answered Oscar, visibly pleased. "I'm glad I won. I certainly worked hard enough. You'll bear witness to that."

"There isn't a man on that team who deserves a victory more than you do," went on Larry. "Some day, if you keep on, you'll be running in the Olympics."

"Wouldn't that astonish my mother! She used to be alarmed if I took a walk more than a mile long. But just now I feel as if I never

wanted to put on running-shoes again. I suppose I'll get over that attitude?"

"Oh, yes, it'll be different to-morrow morning, just as soon as you have a respite from the excitement. And next spring you'll be all on edge to feel the cinders under your feet once more."

As Larry and Oscar emerged from the Gymnasium by a side door, they could hear the bells in the Memorial Tower ringing out their joyful peals, and the people were strolling away from the playing fields, some in exultation, others in despondency, depending on the school with which they were affiliated. Oscar slipped back of the Dining Hall by a circuitous route to Phillips Hall, where he stole up to his room without attracting attention. Here he sat down at his window for a rest, having been careful to lock the door against intruders. He took out the little box containing the gold medal which he had won and which had been placed in his hand as he ran by one of the judges. As he read its wording and studied the design on the face, he could not help wondering,—for he was instinctively a philosopher,—whether the reward was worth the hours and hours of hard labor which he had undergone to gain it. Like many a man who achieves his goal, he questioned

the importance of what he had accomplished. And then he felt of his leg muscles, as firm and hard as iron; he took a deep breath and rejoiced at the gain in health which he had made since he entered Andover eight months before; and he thought, in addition, of how much he had developed in the ability to measure his powers against those of his comrades. "Yes," he said to himself, as he looked again at the shining medal. "It may not be very valuable in itself, but it was worth all the trouble. It stands for my first real success!"

At the football victory celebration in the fall, Oscar had been just a commonplace "prep," grateful for the privilege of helping to pull the barge and of having his famous blue silk pajamas torn into shreds in front of the bonfire. Now he was, by a miraculous transformation, a school hero, whose car lesser men would draw. As he climbed into the ancient vehicle in front of the Gymnasium and rode off with Joe Watson and the other members of the team, he could not help smiling to think that he and the great Joe were jouncing along side by side on what, for a throne of glory, was undoubtedly a very hard and bumpy seat. His grin grew broader as he caught occa-

sional glimpses of Steve Fisher and Hal Manning leading cheers in his honor. With the indefatigable band in front, followed by the barge,—drawn by “preps” like Oscar,—and the students, the procession marched off down Main Street, looking like a chapter of some secret society,—for the boys were all clothed in night apparel and each one was waving a kerosene torch. A long line of automobiles was held back by the police as the parade got under way. Down the broad paved highway it went, the students prancing up and down in a zigzag movement from side to side. Turning into School Street, the leaders halted at Abbot Academy to give cheers for the young ladies of that institution,—the “Fem Sem,” as it has been called for nearly a century. Then crossing over and taking a route up Bartlet Street, they stopped at the house of the Head, where that gentleman appeared in response to the cries of the boys. Standing on his piazza and looking out over the sea of waving lights, he spoke somewhat as follows:

“Fellows, there’s one thing about this meet of which we should all be proud. Some of our old-time athletes, like Phil Allen and Joe Watson, did brilliantly; but the really marvellous factor is the

achievement of such inexperienced performers as Harris and Drummond, who are new men in this kind of sport. I happen to know that neither one of them had ever been in a track suit before this year; yet they displayed the coolness and the resourcefulness of veterans. So long as we can have spirit like that in Andover, we shall not be ashamed of any comparison with the 'good old days.' "

After visits to the houses of two faculty members, who told old stories and were warmly greeted, the procession arrived at the old campus, where an enormous pile of miscellaneous combustibles had been assembled. Here the crowd gathered around the barge and called upon each member of the team. Oscar, sitting nervously through remarks by the two coaches and the captain, finally heard the cry, "We want Harris! We want Harris!" and was raised up by his companions to the cross-bench. There he faced the turbulent mob, a little flustered but undeniably more fluent than those who had preceded him. This is what he said:

"Fellows, the only other time I ever made a speech like this was last September, when I was being hazed as a 'prep,' and, every time I opened

my mouth, some one pasted me in the rear with a barrel-stave. I'm glad that that won't happen again to-night, because this is the first and only time that I can appear on an occasion of this sort. I just want to say that there's nobody on the squad happier than I am. When I came here, I was a poor feeble thing, with hardly enough sense to come in out of the rain. I am probably not much more sensible now, but I am a trifle stronger,—thanks to 'Doc' Rogers, Shep, and Larry Spear. All I want to say is that this school is the greatest place on earth, and that I'm proud to be connected with it."

One by one the remaining members of the team made their brief remarks,—some of them very brief, like Spider Drummond's, "Gee, fellows, I sure am a happy butterfly to-night." The flames, which had leaped high only fifteen minutes before, were now sinking, and the boisterousness of the participants was less noticeable. Here and there a tired "prep" was slipping off to his room, glad to hunt his bed after an exciting day. A few dauntless spirits gave a last long cheer for "Team," and the athletes got down from their perches, glad to stretch their legs again. Oscar went with Hal Manning, who was near at hand,

across Main Street and up the gravel path towards the Main Building. A full moon was rising over the tower above the portico, and there were lights everywhere around the great quadrangle. Before they entered Phillips Hall, Oscar turned for one more look at the spectacle. "Say, Hal, it's good to be alive on a night like this!" he said. He was beginning to realize what life has to offer to those who have something to give in return.

CHAPTER XII

THE HERO AMAZES HIS MOTHER

ON the Sunday morning after the Exeter meet it seemed to Oscar as if he wanted to slumber for weeks and weeks. He had been going through a prolonged period of nervous strain, and the reaction had arrived. Although he awoke at nine o'clock, he was disinclined to get up; so he lay there in bed in a state of reverie until Hal Manning, carrying a bundle of Boston newspapers under his arm, rushed in noisily and pulled him out on to the floor. There was a vigorous wrestling match for a minute or two, and then Oscar, very much awake, sat down to look at the sporting pages. There were the headlines: HARRIS OF ANDOVER BEATS O'BRIEN IN SPECTACULAR RACE; HARRIS AND DRUMMOND BRING VICTORY TO BLUE; HARRIS'S DEFEAT OF O'BRIEN FEATURE OF CLOSE MEET. Two of the papers had photographs of the finish of the mile, showing Oscar with a face which he could not recognize as his

own, so contorted and vicious were the features; and one actually had a full-length picture of him in track costume, with the legend underneath, HARRIS, ANDOVER'S FIGHTING MILER. It was with unaffected delight that he read the detailed accounts of the event, with the tributes to his "fighting spirit," his "grim determination," and his "unexpected display of strength." After two or three of these eulogies, Oscar got up and walked around to make sure that he was not living in a dream. Only a few months before he had been the butt of the school; now he was one of the best-known Andoverians. It was a case of what his Latin teacher would have called the *mobile vulgus*, the fickle populace. And yet Oscar knew that the real transformation had been, not in the crowd, but in himself.

In the evening Oscar had been invited to Professor Foster's for Sunday-night supper,—a treat to which he always looked forward with keen anticipation, for the Fosters, as we have said, were famous for their hospitality. He walked out after vespers with Steve Fisher, Joe Watson, and Hal Manning; and they found there Mr. and Mrs. Loring, together with two well-known alumni of twenty-five years back, whom Professor Foster

addressed as Tom Gordon and Al Mason. There was, of course, a good deal of talk about the meet, during which Oscar and Joe sat very much abashed, overwhelmed by the praise bestowed upon them; but, after a delightful dinner, the men gathered in the library and the conversation turned to bygone days. The teachers and the old graduates vied with one another in telling stories about things as they used to be.

Over the cigars and the coffee some one brought up the subject of practical jokes, particularly as played by one member of the faculty upon his colleagues. Professor Foster related several anecdotes about Mr. Lapham,—familiarily known as “Jimmy,”—the Instructor in Chemistry, now sedately middle-aged, but twenty-five years before an incorrigible jester. It was he who, when the editors of the school year-book asked for an account of his previous history, wrote a biography describing his early marriage and subsequent bereavement in such a moving style that the ladies of the community were ready to weep with the desolated widower; and not until several years later was the fact brought out that he was still a bachelor and that all the tears had been shed without any real cause. It was he who on one

Christmas Day sent his most intimate friend and colleague, "Andy" Goodwin, a canary in a cage, and received in reply the telegram, "It's a bird!" Andy, in retaliation, borrowed a little negro pickaninny from the family of one of the chambermaids at the Inn and put it in Jimmy's bed one afternoon, just before the latter came back from his class, with the inscription on a card, "I win, Jimmy. Mine's a blackbird!"

It was Jimmy who was the hero of an exploit which was long talked about on Andover Hill. Mrs. Anderson, the wife of one of the older teachers, was called upon to prepare a paper for the local Missionary Society on "The Religions of China." Knowing nothing whatever about this perplexing subject, she appealed to Mr. Lapham,—and not in vain. After three or four days, Jimmy appeared at the Anderson home and presented to the lady of the household a typewritten manuscript, which, he said, she was at liberty to use if she wished to do so. Accordingly, at the meeting, Mrs. Anderson read the essay, which began as follows:

"Chinese religions are of three kinds, each differing in a marked degree from the others,—the inductive, the deductive, and the conductive."

In spite of this astounding sentence and of the fact that Jimmy had created a complete hierarchy of hitherto unknown gods and goddesses, many of them anagrams on the names of his friends, the article was taken seriously by the Missionary Society, discussed at some length, and given the approbation of the members.

Occasionally Jimmy and Andy, tired of playing jokes on each other, would combine, with disastrous results to the victim against whom they directed their schemes. In the old days before the installing of a steam-heating plant, each room was warmed by a stove of the air-tight variety, standing at least three feet high. Once another bachelor teacher, Mr. Barrett, went to a house in town to make a call. In his absence, his two associates took down his stove, brought in a little new one of the toy variety, and left the room otherwise as it was. When Barrett returned, he could hardly believe his eyes. His own familiar stove had been replaced by a piece of heating apparatus absolutely different,—and all in an hour's time.

Oscar, who had never thought of his teachers as human beings, sat enthralled by these tales of the frailties and follies of these great men. He was sure that his respect for them would be increased,

now that he knew that they were not above the ordinary emotions of mankind.

"It's queer, isn't it," said Al Mason, "that joking of that sort has practically died out?"

"But it hasn't gone altogether, sir," put in Steve Fisher, who had been listening attentively. "It still goes on here. Haven't you heard of the fun that Shep, Larry Spear, and Roscoe Dale have together?"

"No, go ahead with the story," said Professor Foster. And so Steve spun his yarn. It seems that Roscoe Dale, one of the popular unmarried instructors, had a Ford runabout, which he parked behind his dormitory. Shep and Larry used occasionally to remove the seat and hide it, or take off a rear wheel, or unscrew the spark-plugs, and Roscoe had his own means of getting even. One evening, however, when Shep and Larry were in Roscoe's room, looking out at the lonely Ford, Shep said to Larry, "You go out and jack up Dale's car, and I'll keep him here talking with him. Take off the two front wheels and let the old boat down to the ground. He'll certainly be surprised." Larry accordingly went out and proceeded to begin his task of dismantling the machine. While he was in the very midst of the

operation, however, Shep decided that it would be amusing to turn traitor. Accordingly he drew Dale to the window and pointed out to him the obscure figure who was evidently at some nefarious business. "I'll bet that that's the fellow who is always monkeying with your car," he said to Roscoe; and the latter was out the door and on the run for his machine within two seconds. As he drew nearer, he could see some one working at the front wheel, and, thinking it to be a student, he shouted, "Get out of there!" This gave Larry time enough to straighten up and see Roscoe approaching. He turned and fled at top speed, with Roscoe after him, yelling to him to stop. Then was presented the interesting spectacle of Roscoe pursuing in the gathering darkness a former Olympic champion in the distance runs. It was especially humorous to Shep, who, as the wicked author of this plan, was watching the sight from the window, tears of laughter rolling down his cheeks. The end was not yet, however, for just as Larry reached the road near the Infirmary, he slipped in the mud and fell; and in a few seconds Roscoe, bursting with rage, was upon him, clutching him by the throat. As Larry turned over, Roscoe saw his face, and comprehension

came to him. "You son of a gun!" said Roscoe, as he let Larry up. "So that was you all the time!"

"How did you find me out?" asked Larry, trying to brush off his muddy trousers.

"Shep showed you to me," replied Roscoe.

And then an expression of understanding came over Larry's face. He had been betrayed by his supposed ally. Within the next few days Larry formed with Roscoe an alliance against Shep which resulted,—but that, said Steve, in the words of Kipling, is another story!

"Speaking of good jokes," said Tom Gordon, "I remember perfectly the time when a fellow named 'Ozzy' Webster went to sleep in class. It was in Andy Goodwin's History recitation, and, towards the end of the hour on a day when the room was rather warm, Ozzy fell into a peaceful slumber on the back seat. Andy noticed what had happened and motioned to the fellows to go out as quietly as possible. Meanwhile he went to the door and asked the newcomers in the next division to enter on tiptoe. Everything was absolutely silent, and the plan worked like a charm. The men in the following class all got seated, and then Andy went ahead with the recitation as if

nothing had occurred. Pretty soon Ozzy woke up with a start and looked around him. He was exactly like Rip Van Winkle, coming to life in a new and strange country. Dazed and perplexed, he straightened up, and then the fellows, who had been waiting expectantly, gave him a loud laugh. He took one more glance and then fled. You may be sure that he never heard the last of it."

"I suppose that you don't have 'goat' instructors any longer, do you?" inquired Al Mason, turning to the undergraduates, who were listening with both ears open.

"Yes, we've had one or two," answered Steve, who had been in Andover three years. "I remember when I was a 'prep' that one of the boys threw a lot of papers and shavings into a desk in Pearson Hall and then tossed a match into them. Smoke began to come out the inkwell hole, and the teacher, who was just a young fellow a year out of college, hadn't any idea what to do. Of course the men made a terrible noise and pretended that they were frightened, and two or three gave good imitations of fainting,—they had a real scare the next day when the Head gave them a lecture!"

"Don't you remember 'Doggy' Morris?"

added Hal Manning. "He used to have a section in Mechanical Drawing, and Ted Sherman used to nail his instruments to the table so that, when he tried to pick one of them up, it stuck fast. It occupied him ten minutes every morning to get his tools loose, and yet he actually never complained one word about it. Afraid to protest, I suppose!"

"It sounds to me as if discipline must be better than it was in my day," commented Al Mason. "There's nothing very serious about what you have told, and a teacher who can't keep order better than that deserves to be made a butt. In the period when Tom Gordon and I were here, there was always some inexperienced cub who had no idea how to handle his classes. I can recall clearly the time when the Head,—who was just a young fellow himself then,—had to come into an English classroom because the noise there was shaking the building."

"The fellows nowadays are mighty well behaved," said Professor Foster. "There's almost never any trouble with the seniors. They have passed the silly stage, and unless a teacher is wholly incompetent, they sit quiet, even when they are bored. Do you know, Tom, I really be-

lieve that things have improved since you were here."

"I hate to admit it," answered Tom, "but I think that it's so. I've been doing a little sleuth work since I arrived yesterday, and I'm convinced that these boys here now are a finer type than the crowd I knew in my day. With these young chaps here with us, I'm a little restricted, for I don't want my past exposed to their ridicule. But Fisher and the others won't mind being told the truth. Will you, boys?"

"We're so accustomed to being told that we're corrupt and degenerate and immoral that it's a pleasure to have any older man say that he has confidence in us," said Steve, who naturally took the position of spokesman for the group. "We don't think we're so bad ourselves. But a lot of the ministers who come here have been reading books like *The Plastic Age* and *This Side of Paradise*, and they are convinced that school and college are dens of iniquity. Only last week a minister stood up and told us that our generation was perverse and wicked. I should like to know really what our fathers were like when they were here at Andover."

"Much worse than you are, my son," said

Charlie Foster genially. "I've been at Andover for a good many years, and I can tell you that things are vastly better than they were thirty years ago. We get some fairly dull boys here now, but nothing to what we used to have then. Why, when I first came here to teach,—I won't say how far back,—there sat on the bench in front of me two men, both older than I. They were both football players,—'Pete' Vaughan and 'Pat' Dorsey. Pete was at least six feet, four inches tall, and had arms that reached to his knees. Pat was chunky and stolid, as strong as a bull. Either one could have reached over the desk and pulled me out of my chair with one arm. Neither, however, had the brains of a baby rabbit, and, try as we might, we couldn't get them through the lowest class,—and both were old enough to vote. They played on the eleven for one year, made wonderful records as athletes, and then had to go. We don't get that kind now, I'm glad to say."

"You're right," said Mr. Loring, who had hitherto said very little. "Perhaps we have less rugged manhood than we did then, but there are fewer stupid dolts. I should say that the fellows now are more intelligent and less picturesque.

Can't you remember Pink Sheldon, who went to call so often on a young lady in the town? The family disliked him, the girl hated to see him, and they resorted to every kind of subterfuge to keep him away. He was put on probation, but he would call then between seven and eight, or on Sunday afternoon. No matter what kind of a hint was given him, he would bob up serenely the next day. Finally the faculty had to 'fire' him in order to relieve the poor girl from the annoyance."

"Mr. Loring," said Oscar, who now spoke for the first time, "that fellow had nothing on me. I was the stupidest fellow that ever entered Andover."

"Oh, no, no," protested Professor Foster, in his function as host. "You weren't stupid. You were ignorant. There's a great difference. And when you had a chance to learn, you made rapid progress."

Somehow the topic of athletics was brought up, and Mr. Loring described some of the famous faculty baseball games, in one of which a scholarly teacher, having accidentally knocked a fair ball, promptly ran to third, intending to go around the bases in reverse order. Al Mason told of the

class baseball contests in his time, which degenerated almost into mortal combats. When one team was in the field, the other had small cannon near first and third, which were discharged at intervals to rattle the pitcher. Once a travelling German band was introduced to swell the tumult, and the rash musicians barely escaped with their lives. It was not unusual for a game to last from two o'clock until dark, when the players left the field, their faces streaked with blood and their uniforms bespattered with dirt.

The subject of cleanness in athletics inevitably led to other comparisons between yesterday and to-day. "We probably had stronger teams in the '90's than we have now," said Professor Foster, "but there weren't so many restrictions. We used to have full-grown men on our elevens then. I remember once when we were playing another academy that a small boy, six or seven years old at least, ran up and down the sidelines shouting to the fullback on the opposing team, 'Go it, Daddy, go it!' That could never happen to-day. One of the greatest American football players went to 'prep' school when he was twenty-five!"

"Why, in my time," said Tom Gordon, "there wasn't always friendly feeling between the schools.

There was a period of three years when Andover and Exeter broke off relations, wasn't there?"

"Yes, and there was one actual free-for-all fight in the Exeter station. It's a fact that an Andover teacher, Professor Hoy, stepped in and did some slugging himself to break it up."

"That's funny," said Oscar, thoughtfully. "Nowadays we're always on the best of terms. And when Andover and Exeter men go to college, they stand together."

"That's what I've been trying to say," said Al Mason. "They're a better lot than we were, and people ought to stop criticising them. It's a great school, and the boys in it, take them as a whole, are all right. I watched them in the society house and heard them talk when they didn't dream that any one was listening,—and they'll do. What we middle-aged men want to do is to remember that we ourselves had warm blood in our veins once. God help this poor old world if it ever gets hardening of the arteries!"

"We do seem pretty venerable, I imagine," said Charlie Foster. "Last summer I was talking with a little fellow about six or seven about Andover. He asked me about its history, and I explained that it was founded during the Revolutionary

War. 'Gee!' said the boy, with his eyes popping out of his head, 'and you've been there all the time since then, haven't you, Uncle Charlie?' That shows what the young really think of us."

"It's the heart that counts, not the body," said Mr. Loring. "And you'll always be young in spirit!"

"With which complimentary remark we might as well join the ladies," said Professor Foster. And the talk when they reached the drawing-room took another turn. The men had had their innings.

Conversations like these helped to tell Oscar something of the history of Andover, and he bought a book which sketched its foundation and early development. It rather pleased him to think that the school,—his school,—dated back to the days when Washington was keeping up the courage of his half-starved troops at Valley Forge, when our national government was in the making. Like most boys, he was a conservative in temperament, and he was glad that the academy maintained its ancient traditions. His one deep regret, as he drew nearer his graduation, was that he had not been sent to Andover for the full course. Just as he was beginning to appreciate

its influence, he would have to leave it. There were moments when the thought of departure made him feel depressed.

Meanwhile the spring term hastened to a close. For a week after the track meet, everything centered around baseball. Nobody talked any longer about what Oscar and Len Whitney had done on the previous Saturday; the students were busy speculating what Steve Fisher would be able to do in the pitcher's box and how many hits Bill Jones would make. Oscar went with the school to Exeter, sitting on the way up in the train just across the aisle from Steve Fisher and his father, the Reverend James Fisher, and taking a keen delight in the tales which the latter, who had played on the nine in 1883, had to relate. The game turned out to be the most hair-raising ever held between the two schools. Again and again it seemed as if Exeter were getting the upper hand. The Andover team was undoubtedly over-confident, and this attitude is always dangerous in an Andover-Exeter contest. But Steve Fisher was cool in tight places, and in the last inning, with the score a tie, and with two men out, Van Jackson, Andover's catcher, knocked a grounder to the left of first base, bringing in Dave Williams from

second. The game was won by a score of six to five!

It had indeed been a glorious year,—an “*annus mirabilis*,” Professor Foster called it,—with victories for Andover in three major sports. The boys did their best at the celebration, but there were evidences that they were satiated with success. Oscar took part in the parade, all the time wondering whether it were really true that just a week before he had sat in the barge and had been drawn about the streets as Steve Fisher was being drawn now. He stood on the edge of the crowd with Bull Taylor, watching the huge fire flame up and listened to the speeches and the tired cheers.

“I wonder whether college can possibly be as good as this!” he said to Bull.

“I don’t know,” answered Bull, “and I may never get a chance to find out. But if it can beat this, it must be wonderful!”

Mrs. Harris, who had spent the winter in Egypt and the spring at Mentone, felt obliged to come to the United States for her son’s graduation, and had, therefore, sailed early in June from Cherbourg, on a liner which landed in Boston. Oscar, whose scholastic record was creditable,

found no difficulty in persuading the Head to allow him to meet her on the dock. After wandering rather helplessly along the water-front, he finally ascertained where the *Scythia* was to land and waited patiently for some hours until the vessel discharged her passengers.

Meanwhile Mrs. Harris had gazed from the upper deck with longing eyes at the shore, hoping to have a glimpse of her child,—but she could see no one who resembled him. Clearly, she thought, he had been unable to obtain the necessary leave, and she would not see him until she reached Andover. It was a disappointment! She walked down the gangplank, with two stewards carrying her hand-baggage, and resigned herself to the prospect of a lonely three or four hours. But as she put foot on the dock, a tall young man, in neat flannels and a straw hat, seized her in his arms and gave her a hug which threatened to crush her collar-bone.

“Why, Tenny,” she cried, as she disengaged herself, rearranged her hat, and smoothed down her hair, “how rough you are! It’s just like being embraced by a bear! You don’t seem like my boy, any more!”

“Rough! Why, Mother, that was a demon-

stration of affection. I was merely giving you the glad grapple! ”

Mrs. Harris stopped patting her dress and turned to look at her son. Was this the boy she had left behind,—this young giant so obviously accustomed to slang? She inspected him carefully. He had evidently grown broader of shoulder and much heavier, for his legs were no longer mere spindles and his face was fuller. His skin was brown, and, although he still wore tortoise-shell glasses, there was a sparkle in his eyes which she had never seen there before. He seemed to resemble some one whom she had known! Oh, yes! That was it! He was getting to look exactly like his father,—the same firm jaw, winning smile, and erect carriage. The resulting memory was almost overpowering.

There was a further change, moreover, which impressed Mrs. Harris. Her son was no longer a boy, or a youth, but a man. He bore himself with complete independence, as if he feared no one. “Now, Mother, where are all your bags? I’ll see whether I can put it across with these customs harpies.” Alfred had never behaved in this fashion before. Actually he was taking care of her, whereas she had always watched over him.



MRS. HARRIS STOPPED PATTING HER DRESS AND TURNED TO
LOOK AT HER SON. — *Page 298.*

She rather liked this new system. It was what the boy's father had done for many years.

Alfred was moving with the assurance and speed of one who is accustomed to getting things done. He seemed to know how to say a few pleasant words to the inspector and secure his interest in their behalf, and other people evidently liked to have him around. Mrs. Harris, who knew herself how to manage officials, was more and more bewildered as she saw the efficiency with which he operated. In an incredibly short time they were done with the customs, Alfred had conjured up a taxicab out of nowhere, and they were stepping out at the Copley Plaza.

"I thought that you would like to have tea before you took the ride out to Andover," he said as they entered the lobby.

"How thoughtful you are, Alfred! You are just as your father used to be."

"Mother," said the boy in a hesitating way as they took their seats at the table, "I wonder whether you would mind dropping the 'Alfred' and the 'Tenny' and calling me Oscar? It's what everybody calls me at school, and I'm used to it."

"Oscar!" repeated Mrs. Harris in astonish-

ment. "Oscar! Why Oscar? I don't see where you got that name?"

"I don't, either," confessed the young fellow. "Steve Fisher gave it to me last fall for no reason whatever, and it's stuck. Funny, isn't it? There's a chum of mine named Oliver, and he is always called 'Joe,'—why, I haven't the slightest idea. But I rather like my new name. You know I've always hated 'Alfred,' and I'm not keen for 'Tenny' either."

"I'll try to call you that if you like, Al—Oscar. But it does sound a little queer at first. I tried to give you a name that nobody could shorten up,—and look at the result!"

"Well, it isn't as bad as some names. There's a man on the faculty named 'Claude.' That's terrible! Anyhow, Oscar's all right!"

Mrs. Harris, as she poured the tea and put in the four lumps of sugar that young people usually want, had another look at her offspring.

"Why, Al—Oscar," she said, "you're wearing a soft collar, aren't you? And where did you get that gaudy necktie?"

"Gosh, Mother, if I sported a stiff collar out there, I'd get jollied for fair."

Mrs. Harris did her best to keep her inward

horror from showing on her face. When she had left her son behind in September, he was precise in his speech and accurate in his language. Now he had lost entirely the slightly English accent of which she had been so proud; and he was employing idioms of which she had never heard. But she did not fail to recognize the fact that he had not become vulgar. He was still just as much of a gentleman as ever, and even his clothing, though less formal than she liked, was neat and clean.

"Where's your top-coat? I didn't see you check it. You didn't leave it at the dock, did you?" Mrs. Harris asked, anxiously.

"My top-coat! Why, Mother, I haven't any. I haven't worn an overcoat for months. Not since the snow left the ground."

"How do you keep from catching cold?"

"Great Scott, I don't know. Taking lots of exercise and a cold shower every morning, I guess."

"A cold shower every day! Do you mean to say, Alfred Harris, that you take a cold bath every day?"

"I sure do. And, Mother, please remember that my name is Oscar."

"All right, Oscar. I'll try to keep it in mind. But it's not easy."

"Did I write you, Mother, that I had got my 'A'?"

"No, you didn't. In what subject was that? In English?"

"No, Mother dear, not that. I mean my 'A' for winning against Exeter in a relay race."

"Do you mean to say that you ran a mile? Why, I never have let you run at all! Your heart is weak."

"I'll never admit it, Mrs. Thomas Walker Harris. I won the mile since then, too. And I pretty nearly broke the record, besides. I wish you could have been there." And Oscar proceeded to give his mother a thrilling description of his battle with Red O'Brien.

"I'm glad I wasn't there," answered Mrs. Harris, with a shudder. "I should have been worried to death."

Oscar was troubled and alarmed. He wanted desperately to explain some things to his mother, but he did not wish to offend or hurt her. He began in a rather apologetic manner.

"Mother, should you mind if I said something before we get out to the school?"

HE AMAZES HIS MOTHER

“No, of course not.”

“Well, I’ll try to make it clear. You see, Andover is a place with all sorts of peculiar customs,—at least they probably will seem strange to you. If the fellows there think that you aren’t manly or independent, they make fun of you. Now you mustn’t treat me or speak to me as if I were a child in a baby-carriage. If you act as if I were a piece of porcelain, I’ll get razzed.” His mother’s face looked puzzled, and Oscar translated, “I mean, I’ll be ridiculed.”

“Now,” he went on, “the fellows up there may not seem to you like the English boys we used to meet, but they’re really wonderful, and nobody can be finer than they are. You have to understand us Americans to realize our splendid traits.” This last was to Mrs. Harris a delightful touch,—“us Americans!”

Mrs. Harris, in spite of her nervousness about her child, was really a sensible woman. The bereavement which she had suffered had, it is true, made her apprehensive, but her solicitude was based on an ardent affection. She had been taught much by her husband, and she could understand what Oscar was attempting to get at. Oscar’s letters, moreover, had opened her eyes to

THE ANDOVER WAY

the fact that the father's character was beginning to assert itself in the son. It would still take her some time to adjust herself to changed conditions, but she was ready to do her best.

"Look here, Oscar," she said, after she had sipped her tea and regained control of herself, "I don't want you to be ashamed of your mother, and I'm going to try to do just what will please you. Only you'll have to be patient if I make a few mistakes at first. You see I'm a foreigner now, and you may have to teach me how to behave like an American." She smiled as she thought of Oscar's phrase: "us Americans!"

"That's all right, Mother. You're the prettiest mother that any one in the class can show, and I shall be proud to take you around. You'll get used to everything in a hurry."

The tables were completely turned. When she had brought Oscar to Andover, she had attended to every detail. Now she had Oscar to wait on her. Mrs. Harris, as she rode out in the train, through Wakefield and Reading and Ballardvale, kept pondering on her problem. It was going to be hard for her not to recommend rubbers for him when it rained, but she would have to keep still. The boy had outgrown some of his former

pretty ways, but she was sure that she preferred him as he now was. She had nurtured a boy who had obviously become a man, and must be treated as such.

As he towered above her on the platform of the Andover station, making arrangements for the disposition of her trunks and arranging for a taxicab up the hill, she could see in him again the resemblance to his father. Tears filled her eyes at the recollection, but she stepped aside for a moment and dried them with her handkerchief. She must not make a fool of herself, she must not! And, when he left her at the Phillips Inn for a rest before dinner, she was resolved to act so that Alfred,—there it was again!—so that Oscar would be glad to exhibit her to his friends.

CHAPTER XIII

THE HERO CLOSES THE YEAR

MRS. HARRIS had arrived on the Friday preceding Commencement Week, just in time to attend all the festivities, and she was amused to discover that all the plans and arrangements for the next few days were being made by Oscar. He had decided where she was to stay, what invitations she was to accept, and even the hours when she was to rest; and she had to adhere to his program. Her sensations as she found out that she was being "bossed" are a little difficult to analyze. At first she protested, but she quickly saw that this did no good whatever; the boy, as his father had done, merely kept straight on in his course, saying very little, but waving aside all criticisms. Altogether, he was a rather forceful personality, whom it was impossible to withstand. It was certain that he had character. Somehow the school had brought out all his good traits and eradicated many of his former weaknesses.

A night's reflection quite reconciled Mrs. Harris

to the situation, and she appeared at breakfast entirely composed and looking very girlish and attractive. She was, of course, still a young woman, and she had left off her mourning black when she returned to the United States, having decided that it was her business now to devote herself to her son rather than to her husband's memory. It was no small satisfaction for her to notice that, as she appeared in the latest models of Parisian hats and gowns, Oscar showed himself very proud of her; and indeed, with her light hair, slender figure, and vivacious manner, she seemed more like his sister than his mother. Sons on such occasions are very critical, but Oscar expressed himself as entirely satisfied.

Now that her mind was adjusted to conditions as she found them, Mrs. Harris,—who was not without a sense of humor,—amused herself by studying her stalwart son to see exactly what Andover had done to him. In the Phillips Inn with her were other parents of boys in the graduating class, many of them of the “doting” kind which Oscar so much disliked. Each mother opened the dialogue by boasting of her offspring's achievements, such as they were, and Mrs. Harris had often occasion to be thankful that she could say,

in a casual manner, "Yes, my boy is a member of K. P. N., and the best mile-runner on the track team." After this ceremony had been duly performed and the matter of boyish diseases and tendencies had been covered, the parents fell back on the more general but always fascinating topic of the influence of Andover on its students. Not every mother was as pleased as Mrs. Harris. There were some who felt that their sons had been submerged in the crowd; there were others who complained that their boys had not received enough personal attention from the teachers; now and then there would be one who was convinced that her Willie would have done better somewhere else. Mrs. Harris, who knew almost nothing of other American schools, listened attentively to all that was said and acquired some useful information,—especially when, after hearing all about Johnny Jones from Johnny's mother, she inquired about Johnny from Oscar and was told the painful truth,—that Johnny was lazy or conceited or "footless." She became convinced of the truth of Stephen Leacock's remark, "Some men would have been what they are, no matter what they were! "

On Saturday afternoon Mrs. Harris was invited

to the Head's house for tea, and, in the seclusion of a quiet corner, had an enlightening conversation with that busy gentleman.

"Ah, Mrs. Harris," he said, as he shook her hand cordially, "it's nearly a year since we met, is it not? I recall distinctly your call just before you sailed for Europe. Has your boy Oscar changed at all since you saw him last?"

"Indeed he has! Meeting him again is like taking an excursion into an unfamiliar country. Now and then I can detect a trace of his old self, but he's really an entirely different person. I've had to get reacquainted with him."

"I can readily imagine it. He is not very much like the puzzled youngster who brought me some free verse last fall or who tried to smoke a cigarette on the portico of the Main Building." And he told Mrs. Harris the two stories, laughing as he did so. "Those incidents show how he began his career. Any ordinary boy could not have recovered from the shock. But Oscar has a happy faculty for learning by experience. Each mistake that he has made has taught him something."

"I have been wondering just what did happen. What magic charm did you employ to effect such a transformation?"

“We did very little but provide the opportunity, Mrs. Harris. The inevitable course of Nature did the rest. Here was a boy who came of sound stock, whose body, feeble though it seemed to be, was naturally strong, and whose will, though it was untried, was resolute. He had never been placed in an environment where his powers could develop. We didn’t put anything in to him; we just drew it out. That’s what education means, you know,—the Latin *e-ducere*, to draw out. My only regret is that he could not be here longer. He is only just beginning to show his strength. In college he will make a brilliant record. I have watched him carefully, and I know.”

“I have been especially interested in what he has had to say about his friends,” said Mrs. Harris, who loved, like every mother, to talk about her son. “He never used to mix at all with other boys, and now he seems to know everybody in school. Apparently there isn’t anything of the snob about him.”

“Well, that is a kind of Andover tradition, if you’ll let me boast a little. The school undoubtedly helped to teach him that. Here on this Hill it matters very little what kind of a family a lad comes from. It’s what he is and does that counts.

No democracy could be fairer,—and it's typically American, I believe."

"I have never forgotten your words to me as I left your house last fall," concluded Mrs. Harris, noticing that another mother was hovering about, evidently hoping for a word with the Head. "And I want to say that every single item in your prophecy has been fulfilled."

"I'm not always as fortunate as that," laughed the Head, as he turned to confront a mother whose son, because of a failure in English, was not to receive a diploma. Another phase of his complex and interesting task was before him, for he was obliged to explain failures as well as successes.

Hoping to get better acquainted with Oscar's friends, Mrs. Harris urged him to invite several of them to dinner at the Inn that evening. At six-thirty a little group gathered in one of the private dining-rooms, including some of the representative leaders of the school,—Bull Taylor, Kid Wing, Joe Watson, Spider Drummond, Barney Wright, and, of course, Hal Manning. On one side Mrs. Harris had placed Bull; on the other, Hal. The contrast between them was not so striking as the similarity. It is true that Hal's

speech was the closely clipped accent of the well-bred Bostonian, with the broad "a" and the slurred "r's," while Bull's pronunciation was more nasal, and often his final "g's" were left off. Yet both were gentlemen, with careful table manners and unfailing courtesy. Both were masters, when occasion demanded, of the mysterious slang language which had at first so puzzled Mrs. Harris; and both were neatly dressed, in the fashion which Andover conventionality that year prescribed. They met, of course, on absolutely even terms. Each, having done something in school life, was considered by his mates to be a man, not only by personality but also by accomplishment. Each had been elected to one of the best fraternities in the academy. Yet one had a large allowance, and the other was waiting on table and running a laundry agency to support himself through school. Hal would step out of college into a brokerage firm where his path to success would be made smooth and a partnership eventually awaited him. Bull, no matter what he undertook, would have to work up slowly, with no influence back of him. Yet both were typical Andover products, and Mrs. Harris was inclined to believe that, at the end of a quarter of a cen-

tury, Bull's achievement in life, measured by the things that really count, might be as great as Hal's.

As she chatted with them and listened to their stories, Mrs. Harris was constantly watching to see how these boys treated Oscar,—whether there was any condescension or superciliousness in their attitude. So far as she could observe, Oscar was on even terms with them in every respect. Occasionally when the conversation would turn in his direction and he would tell some anecdote, she could not believe that he was her son, so much he seemed like a stranger. She noticed that, as a host, Oscar attended to every detail and made sure that each guest had a good time.

The talk turned to church services. "I certainly hope that the minister to-morrow will not compare life to a football game," said Kid Wing, introducing the topic. "We've had four sermons like that since Christmas, and we're all tired of that figure of speech."

"That must be funny," said Mrs. Harris. "Do you keep track of sermons as closely as that?"

"I certainly do, Mrs. Harris," replied Kid. "Why, last year we had three sermons in succession, by three different men, on exactly the

same text,—something about the Prodigal Son. And then one minister came here twice during the term and gave us the same sermon each time,—forgot absolutely that he'd delivered it here before. Oh, we remember things of that sort."

"The worst," said Hal Manning, "was the time when there was a kind of mania for reciting a poem that ended 'Play up! Play up! and play the game!' It has something to do with cricket, I guess. Almost everybody who spoke in chapel all during the spring term would end up by dropping his voice to a low impressive tone and saying, 'And now, my friends, there is a well-known poem which sums up the spirit of this ancient school,'—and then he would get off that old chestnut once more. Once Dolly Loring,—that's the teacher, Mrs. Harris,—who never goes to church anyhow, and knew nothing about what was happening,—closed his recitation by saying, 'Gentlemen, there's a little poem that I should like to read you because it so beautifully illustrates what I've been saying,'—and he started:

" 'There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
Ten to make and the match to win! ' "

Every fellow in the class knew how it ended, and

when he reached the last line of the first stanza, they all joined in:

“ ‘But his Captain’s hand on his shoulder smote—
Play up! Play up! and play the game!’ ”

It was so funny that the whole class was shrieking with laughter. Of course Dolly was peeved for a minute, but then somebody explained the joke and he saw the fun in it. He’s always a good sport.”

Mrs. Harris could have sat until midnight listening to these entertaining tales of undergraduate life, but the guests had to leave for their society meetings, and the party broke up by nine o’clock. The dinner had been for her a liberal education. When they had all departed, she took a chair by the window of her room looking out over the campus. From the terrace in front of Phillips Hall came the music of familiar tunes, sung by the seniors assembled there to get cool on a hot night. She went to sleep with a feeling that she was dwelling in the midst of romance.

Mrs. Harris wanted to attend the church service on Sunday morning, and Oscar took a seat with her in one of the rear pews, feeling a little peculiar out of his accustomed bench. His mind, I

fear, was not on the sermon. At first he wondered whether the clergyman would use the time-worn text, but when it became apparent that he was to speak on something else, the boy lost interest. In his reverie he went back to the morning when he had first taken his place in chapel and had looked around at the colored windows and the memorial tablets on the walls. Every once in a while some one of Oscar's acquaintances, usually Ted Sherman, would stir up an argument against compulsory church and chapel, and would put up rather a plausible plea for his side of the case. But here, as he sat with the school in a body, Oscar realized that mere logic meant nothing. It was sentiment which counted, so far as church was concerned. Oscar thought that he should like to have his sons and grandsons sit in these seats as he had done and drink in, so to speak, the spirit of the old academy. Suddenly he heard the clergyman announcing the closing hymn, "Onward, Christian Soldiers!" He smiled to think that he had been there for half an hour without hearing a word of the sermon. What good, then, had he derived from the service? As he pondered on this problem, he could answer his question only by protesting to

himself that there was something intangible and indefinite, but very real, which made attendance worth while. His mother unquestionably thought so, for she spoke of it as if it had given her inspiration for the day.

As soon as church was over, Mrs. Harris and Oscar started with Mrs. Manning and Hal, in the Mannings' car, for a trip along the Massachusetts North Shore, arranged to prove to Mrs. Harris how beautiful it was. They went first to Salem, where they saw Hawthorne's House of Seven Gables; then they continued along the rocky coast to Magnolia, where they stopped for a picnic lunch on the boulders overlooking Gloucester Harbor and the reef of Norman's Woe, from which the mournful sound of the bell-buoy floated to them across the waves. Hal stood on a lofty point and declaimed in a theatrical tone:

"Such was the wreck of the *Hesperus*,
 In the midnight and the snow!
 Christ save us all from a death like this,
 On the reef of Norman's Woe!"

As they sat there out in the warm June air, the harrowing tragedy of the good ship *Hesperus* seemed very remote and improbable. After lunch they motored to Ipswich and Newburyport, with

its long High Street lined with lovely colonial homes, and then to Amesbury, where they stopped to visit Whittier's birthplace. Here Oscar came back at Hal with a still less suitable poem, and, posing under the hot sun, quoted from *Snow-Bound*:

“Unwarmed by any sunset light
The grey day darkened into night,
A night made hoary with the swarm
And whirl-dance of the blinding storm
As zigzag, wavering to and fro,
Crossed and recrossed the winged snow.”

With this, their literary pilgrimage came to an end, and they returned to Andover, just in time for chapel, after a circuit of seventy miles through one of the most beautiful sections of the New England countryside.

Mrs. Harris and Mrs. Manning together watched the procession of seniors come down the Elm Arch, with Professor Bannard at their head as Chief Marshal, and inside the chapel they had seats beside the Reverend James Fisher, Steve's father. The Baccalaureate Sermon was preached by a young Andover graduate named Boynton, who talked very simply and directly on some of the fundamental virtues, like sincerity and loyalty and patriotism. With moving eloquence he re-

ferred to Andover men who had displayed these qualities in times of crisis,—to Jack Wright, the young “poet of the air,” who, at eighteen, had sacrificed his life for a noble cause in the World War, and Schuyler Lee, who had been killed in combat with four of the enemy,—finally telling the story of “Tom” Harris, who had fallen desperately wounded while going over the top in the Argonne Offensive. If he had known that Major Harris’s wife and son were in the congregation, he would not have mentioned that hero. But Mrs. Harris bore herself admirably, even though she was unable to restrain her tears. As for Oscar, he merely sat up straighter, proud that he had such a father. The clergyman closed his reference to Major Harris by a fitting quotation from Wordsworth’s poem:

“This is the Happy Warrior; this is He
That every Man in Arms should wish to be.”

He did not know until the Head told him afterwards that his sermon had had a poignant meaning to at least two of his hearers.

The next few days were busy ones, during which there seemed to be always something for Mrs. Harris to do. At intervals Oscar took final ex-

aminations in his courses, but did not appear to be much worried about them. In the afternoons there were teas with some of Oscar's friends on the faculty; and three times she and Oscar were invited to dinner. Furthermore, Mrs. Harris attended all the events of Commencement Week, from the organ recital down,—or up,—to the Promenade. On one evening there was a performance by the Dramatic Club; on another there was the Potter Prize Speaking contest, in which Hal took first place; and on another the Musical Clubs gave a concert. Oscar amused his mother by apologizing for not being on the Musical Clubs. As he explained it, he made up his mind during the winter term, when ambition developed in his soul, that he would try out for every school organization. When a call was issued for candidates for the Glee Club, Oscar appeared before Dr. Schleiermacher, ready for the ordeal.

"Have you ever done any singing?" asked the Director of Music.

"No, none to speak of," admitted Oscar.

"What makes you think that you can do well enough to make the Glee Club?"

"Well, I don't seem to be good for much else, and I thought that I would give this a try, sir."

The patient Dr. Schleiermacher smiled tolerantly and patiently, and then told Oscar to run up and down the scale. The boy threw back his head, opened his mouth, and emitted a series of sounds. The result was astounding. Oscar could play the piano very well indeed, and he knew the theory of harmony; but he had no control whatever over his voice. Dr. Schleiermacher listened a moment, beat with his fist on the back of a seat, and said, "Stop!" Oscar paused, and the teacher said, "Harris, are you making fun of me?"

"No, sir, no, sir, of course not!"

"Do you mean to say that that noise is your natural singing voice?"

"Why, yes, sir!"

"Well, I never heard anything quite like it. It's unique! It isn't bass or tenor or baritone,—it's more like snare! Now I tell you what to do. You go home quietly and say nothing about that voice of yours, and perhaps nobody will ever find out what it's like. But if the other fellows ever do find out, I'm afraid for your life. I'll try to keep your secret."

Laughing heartily, Oscar asked, "You don't think that I have any disease, do you, sir?"

"No, not as bad as that. But if I were you I should consider having my tonsils removed and my adenoids cut out. Then, perhaps, the pain would be less for the hearers."

Oscar could see that Dr. Schleiermacher was joking, but he nevertheless beat a retreat as quickly as possible, and abandoned all his musical aspirations from that time forth. When Mrs. Harris heard this tale, she smiled. "You're just like your father again," she said. "He couldn't sing a note, and yet he would insist on taking part in singing the hymns in church. It used to be agony for anybody near him."

"I'm different from him in one way, then," replied Oscar, "for I've learned enough now never to open my mouth when there's anything of the kind going on."

Commencement Day itself was full of exciting moments for Mrs. Harris. It was perfect June weather,—cloudless, with just enough light wind blowing to keep it from being too hot. She stood with Steve Fisher's father watching the procession of graduates and distinguished guests march around the campus to the music of the stirring Andover songs played by the band; she was pleased when she saw on the program Oscar

name as a member of the *Cum Laude* Society, made up of the highest scholars in the class; and she was just as delighted as Mr. Fisher when Steve was awarded the Yale Cup, for the best scholar and athlete combined, and the Fuller Prize, voted to the senior best representing the ideals of Andover. Oscar himself received one of the Goodhue prizes in English, and went through the publicity of the long walk down the aisle to the platform, accompanied by the applause of the audience. The Otis Prize, for "the greatest general improvement," was given to Joe Watson. When it was announced, Mr. Foxcroft, the Registrar, who was sitting near Mrs. Harris, leaned over and said, "If it had not been expressly stipulated that the winner must have been three years in Andover, your son would have taken that prize without any doubt."

"I'm mighty glad that Joe did get it," answered Mrs. Harris. "He deserves some recognition for what he has accomplished. I have heard a great deal about him."

Just then the Head stepped forward once more, evidently for the purpose of making another significant announcement.

"There is a surprise waiting for us this year,—

an unusual event. I beg leave to introduce Dr. Fullerton, of New York City."

Dr. Fullerton arose and spoke:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am here merely as the representative of Mrs. Brooks Aten, the donor of the Brooks-Bryce Prizes for essays on the general subject of amicable relations between the United States and Great Britain. As you know, each of several great American schools submits an essay each year in a national contest, the winner of which receives a silver cup and a summer trip to Europe. Last year the award went to Exeter; it is my pleasure this year to announce the winner of the national competition as Alfred Tennyson Harris, of Andover."

There was a tremendous storm of applause as this name was pronounced. Everybody looked in Oscar's direction, and the Head beckoned him to come to the platform. There Dr. Fullerton handed to him a silver goblet nearly a foot high and also an envelope containing a check for one hundred pounds to be expended on a trip to Europe. The ovation which Oscar received as he fondled the huge cup in his hands was overwhelming. It was impossible for him to say a word. He simply nodded his head and proceeded back to

his seat like a man in a daze. As for Mrs. Harris, her heart was so full that she could only smile through her tears in answer to the congratulations that came to her from those who sat in her vicinity.

After the exercises she met Oscar, and they strolled up the Elm Arch. "Well," she said, after they had escaped from the crowd, "you're getting to be a good deal like a story-book hero, aren't you? First you save a boy from a fire; then you win a mile run against the rival school; and now you walk off with a trophy big enough for a giant! The only thing left for you to do is to have a beautiful heiress fall in love with you!"

"For the present I'm going to be satisfied with you," answered Oscar, smiling at her. "Besides, not even you could ever call me handsome."

"No," said Mrs. Harris, "I suppose that you are not exactly classical in your features. You have what is called a 'strong' face."

"Strong is right!" replied Oscar. "I know what that means,—it's a mild way of saying 'homely as a hedge fence.'"

"Well, you suit me," concluded Mrs. Harris, as she left Oscar at the Gymnasium. "I'm like all

foolish mothers,—I wouldn't have you changed a bit! ”

In the evening came the Promenade, the closing feature of Commencement Week. Although Oscar had been during his European years what might have been called a “fusser,” he had, since his arrival in Andover, neglected whatever opportunities had been thrown in his way for meeting girls. As the spring dance drew near, he had been urged by several of his friends to take their sisters.

“Betty is really a pretty decent sort,” admitted Kid Wing, as he suggested the possibility of Oscar's being his sister's escort. “She's a bit old,—eighteen,—but she would do very well for you, Oscar. Why not be a sport and ask her? That will let me take a Dana Hall girl that I want to bring.”

“I'm sorry not to help you out,” was Oscar's answer. “I know that your sister is a ‘peach,’ but I've got my mother to look out for. She looks almost like a girl, and she's just as slim and graceful as any of these flappers.”

It was some years since Mrs. Harris had danced, and she hated to admit to Oscar how much she looked forward to the Promenade. The Gymna-

sium presented a very gay appearance, decorated as it was with banners of every hue and educational institution. Mrs. Harris took her place among the older ladies, but she was not allowed to remain there long. After Oscar had danced with her, she became one of the most popular partners on the floor, and his friends were repeatedly "cutting in." Furthermore, Oscar introduced her to several of the bachelor members of the faculty, who certainly did their best to give her a good time. When Oscar saw that she was well taken care of, he went out and sat under the trees, enjoying the cool night air and watching the Japanese lanterns tossing on their wires among the trees. It had been a full day for him, and he was glad to have a chance to take his bearings. Once he caught sight of Steve Fisher and his father looking at the names carved on the base of the Memorial Tower, and he saw the older man's hand rest affectionately on his son's shoulder. Then there came to Oscar, as he had never known it before, a sense of the loss which he had suffered. When the two had moved along, Oscar strolled over to study the long list again. There it was, his father's name, THOMAS WALKER HARRIS, almost at the head of the Roll of Honor. Some-

thing swelled in his throat as he looked at the letters. Then, with a sigh, he turned away, to go back to his mother and the gayety by which she was surrounded.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HERO SAYS HIS FAREWELLS

IT was a gloriously warm and hazy morning in late June on Andover Hill. Again four perfectly healthy young men were stretched out lazily on the grass in front of George Washington Hall, in attitudes which expressed disdain for all forms of mental and physical exertion. As it was nearing the close of college entrance examination week, the quartette should, I suppose, have been hard at work over their books, preparing for the next test. But there was a summer languor in the air, and it was hard for these recent graduates of the school to settle down to business.

"Well, we're honest-to-goodness alumni at last!" burst out Hal Manning. "And I've locked my 'dip' safely away in my trunk."

"I never thought I should make it," commented Joe Watson. "But somehow at the last moment all the 'profs' had an attack of generosity, and they let me through. Let no one tell me again that teachers are hard-hearted."

"They simply couldn't stand having you around here any longer," remarked Ted Sherman, who, as usual, was ready with a jibe at one of his friends. "Haven't you kept them worried for three long weary years? I should think that they would be willing to stretch their consciences to the limit in order to get you out of the way."

"Well, Ted," answered Joe, who was not too sleepy to retaliate, "I haven't heard yet that the Trustees are going to offer you a position on the faculty."

"Good for you, Joe!" interposed Steve Fisher. "On the contrary, I've been informed confidentially that the Head realizes Ted's corrupting influence on the young!"

"By the way, what kind of a job did 'Dad' Warner wish on you yesterday?" inquired Hal, referring to the fact that Mr. Warner, the Alumni Secretary, had asked Steve to come to see him.

"Oh, he just wants me to be a Class Agent,—that's what he calls it,—and collect money from you fellows later on for the Alumni Fund. And, believe me, I'll do it, if I have to perpetrate an assault on each one of you. And when you get to be millionaires, I'll compel you to build a dormitory apiece."

"By that remote date most of us shall have forgotten Andover," said Ted.

"Not on your life!" ejaculated Hal. "I'm sure, for one, that no college can ever mean to me what this place does!"

"That's the way I feel," added Joe. "I've grown up here, and I'm coming back just as often as I can, until I get to be a cripple in a wheelchair."

"That's Ted's attitude, too," said Steve. "But he can't resist posing as a cynic. Come now, you grouch, don't you really hate to leave here? Own up."

"Yes, I suppose I do," admitted Ted reluctantly.

"I was sure of it," responded Steve. "Confession is good for the soul, and it won't harm you to be honest for once. But I've got to do a little more plugging on that Greek." And he sat up, yawning widely and stretching his arms.

"Say, who's that over by Pearson Hall?" inquired Hal.

"Why, that's your disreputable roommate. That's Oscar Harris and his mother."

"She's certainly a corker, isn't she?" said Steve, as he looked in that direction. "I noticed

that you fellows danced with her about six times apiece at the 'Prom.' ”

“ Yes, and you missed a lot by not coming in yourself,” replied Hal. “ She is certainly light on her feet, and we got along beautifully together. She told me that I was the best dancer on the floor.”

“ That’s funny,” said Ted. “ She told me that I was the best partner she had had that evening.”

“ Think of that! ” added Joe. “ And she let me know that she had never found a man who danced as well as I.”

“ Well,” said Steve, “ it’s easy to see that Mrs. Harris is a strategist. No wonder she’s popular! Now I’ve never danced with her, but I like her just the same! ”

“ Do you know,” said Joe unexpectedly, “ that Oscar Harris is one of the finest men in our class? ”

“ Tell us something new! ” responded Ted. “ Of course he is. There’s no one better,—always barring this present irreproachable company of saints! ”

“ You didn’t always think so, did you? ” said Steve significantly, as he stood up to go to his room.

stand why I wasn't led down to the station by the Student Council and warned not to appear again on the premises."

"Somehow you have managed to scrape along," said Hal, coming to his roommate's rescue. "And your record is almost as good as Sherman's." He looked a little sarcastically at Ted as he made the characteristic remark.

"You four have certainly done a lot for Oscar," said Mrs. Harris. "I'll have to admit that he's a little less green than he was last September."

"Most of us improve here," said Steve. "We're all a little better than when we came, I hope."

"I suppose I ought to say 'Good-bye' now," interposed Oscar. "We're off this afternoon."

"Where are you going?" inquired Ted.

"Oh, we sail for Europe to-morrow. You see, I've got to spend that Brooks-Bryce prize money on a trip to England, and Mother would like to be in Cornwall and Devon for the summer, anyway."

"When shall we six meet again?" asked Hal, paraphrasing the famous line in dramatic style.

"We shall get together again before long, even though we may be at different colleges," answered

By this time Oscar and his mother, who were strolling about in the sunshine, had come nearer, and the other three boys rose also to speak to them. They all shook hands in the most cordial way with Mrs. Harris, who had manifestly become a favorite with them. When they had chatted for some minutes, Mrs. Harris said, "By the way, wasn't it near this spot that I saw you four for the first time?"

"That's right, it was," recollected Steve. "Last fall we were all lying here when you and Oscar came along hunting for Mr. Lynton. It was a day a good deal like this."

"Sure enough," added Joe, "I remember it perfectly."

"I have heard something about it," said Oscar, with a twinkle in his eye. "Mother, did you know that Ted Sherman here wanted to bet twenty-five dollars then that I wouldn't last at Andover until Christmas?"

"Oh, Mrs. Harris!" replied Ted, for once really discomfited and blushing very red. "That was just a joke, that's all!"

"Joke nothing!" was Oscar's answer. "You meant every word of it, and it's a marvel that I wasn't 'fired' by Thanksgiving. I can't under-

Steve. "And we shall be back on this Hill often. It's the Andover way."

They shook hands and separated. Within a day or two they were miles from Andover, and their schooldays together were ended. But they had memories which lingered until long after they had grown-up sons in the academy which they loved.

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